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ELECTION EVE SPECIAL

EDWARD ROTHSTEIN • WILL PUERTO RICO EXPLODE? BY ROBERT PASTOR • PAUL FUSSELL

THE NEW REPUBLIC

THE FINAL DAYS

How I stumped the stars
Morton Kondracke

The other races *The Editors*
K.C. Armageddon *Sidney Blumenthal*
Rockefeller's ambition *John B. Judis*
Kerry vs. Shamie *Jack Beatty*
The Helms hunt *Katherine Fulton*
Reagan's appeal *Kiku Adatto*
Simonizing Percy *Basil Talbott Jr.*
Waiving the rules *Marc Granetz*
The Truman precedent *TRB*
The end is nigh *Washington Diarist*

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CORRESPONDENCE

THE REAL MONDALE

To the editors:

It's a pity Moshe Dayan can't defend himself from being quoted out of context by Jacques Torczyner ("Correspondence," TNR, October 29). The passage critical of Vice President Walter Mondale quoted by Mr. Torczyner from Mr. Dayan's memoir refers not to Camp David but to a White House discussion nearly a year earlier. Walter Mondale's role in helping to achieve peace between Egypt and Israel was described to me by former Prime Minister Menachem Begin himself. In 1978 Mr. Mondale made an official visit to Israel, where he met with Mr. Begin. His pledges of American support for Israel, at a time when Israel was wary of U.S. intentions, were received with relief and gratitude by the Begin government. The new sense of Israeli confidence led directly to a resumption of the stalled Egyptian-Israeli talks later that month, the major result of which was the agreement by Sadat and Begin to go to Camp David.

Walter Mondale's reputation as a strong and articulate friend of Israel is well merited. His participation in Camp David enhanced that reputation—and deservedly so.

RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
New York, New York

NICARAGUA NETTLES

To the editors:

To be sure, the Sandinistas are guilty of some "sins." But before Robert Leiken's article ("Nicaragua's Untold Stories," TNR, October 8) becomes accepted as an objective description of Nicaragua, some distortions should be noted for the record. Although Mr. Leiken does accurately report that popular dissatisfaction with the Sandinistas is widespread, it is not at the level he suggests. Through the "people's militias," the Sandinistas have made rifles readily available to peasants—on a far greater scale than most Latin governments would ever feel confident enough to do.

Mr. Leiken further ignores a major source of the discontent—the Reagan Administration's war against the Sandinistas. Mr. Leiken fails to mention the bombing of fuel depots, the attacks on farm cooperatives, the blowing up of grain silos, the Administration's pressure on the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank not to lend to Nicaragua. All have contributed to the economic crisis; all have made the economy "scream"—as Nixon and Kissinger did when they set out to topple the Allende government in Chile.

Nor does Mr. Leiken mention that the war by the U.S.-backed *contras* has claimed 7,000 Nicaraguan lives, according to the government. Proportionately, in the United States that would translate to more than half a million dead.

Mr. Leiken's approach is to take a few specific instances, then draw general conclusions. For example, he disparages the Sandinistas' literacy campaign by saying he met two graduates who could not read their diplomas. He ignores the thousands who did learn to read under the program. Nor does he mention any of the other educational accomplishments. A day care program has been established and school enrollment has more than doubled since the Sandinista victory. And he completely omits the Sandinistas' accomplishments in health care. Tens of thousands of infants have been immunized, polio has virtually disappeared, and diarrhea has been eliminated as the major cause of infant mortality.

He writes that "in every town" he visited, former Somoza officials now run the Sandinista Defense Committees (C.D.S.). There are some 8,000 C.D.S.'s. How many did he survey? It should be noted that some of them are headed by lay church leaders. Mr. Leiken writes about C.D.S. abuses—and there are abuses. But he ignores their role in giving citizens an opportunity to participate in local government and that C.D.S. volunteers carried out the country's infant immunization effort.

Corruption and high living do exist among a few Sandinista officials, as they do among government leaders throughout the world. But Mr. Leiken exaggerates the extent of official abuses in Nicaragua, and they certainly do not justify his use of the charged phrase, "swinging Sandinistas." Some forty members of the Reagan Administration have been accused of ethical misconduct, yet I do not think Mr. Leiken would say that "decadence is endemic" in the Reagan Administration.

It is unfortunate that Mr. Leiken rejected opportunities to present a more balanced picture. A measured debate about the Sandinistas is needed, and democratic (as opposed to military) pressures should be applied to the Sandinistas to move them toward allowing more freedom of expression, political and cultural. But instead of advancing those objectives, Mr. Leiken's article, because of its bias and excesses, hinders them.

RAYMOND BONNER
New York, New York

To the editors:

The examples described by Robert Leiken are not isolated cases but everyday practice that I was able to see during four years in the foreign service of the Sandinista regime. A few weeks before I left my post at the Nicaraguan Embassy in Caracas in September 1983, a member of the Sandinista junta arrived in Venezuela for an official visit. A minister in his delegation carried a briefcase with $40,000 to pay for hotel rooms and the culinary and sexual extravagances of the high-level revolutionary group. The chief point of the meeting between the Sandinista leaders and the Venezuelan president was to request hard currency for Nicaragua's economy!

ANTONIO FARACH
Oakton, Virginia

To the editors:

Having just returned from several weeks in Nicaragua and Honduras, I feel I must comment on the lack of objectivity in the article by Robert Leiken. One should compare the "Sins of the Sandinistas" with government depredations in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. Compare the Managua Coca-Cola strike with strike conditions in Guatemala ("Coke Battle," TNR, September 17&24). A labor leader gets a bloody nose in Nicaragua; two American labor consultants get their heads blown off in El Salvador. Nicaraguan Bishop Obando y Bravo counsels young men to avoid the draft and is not penalized; Salvadoran Bishop Oscar Romero states that soldiers should not murder innocent civilians and is assassinated. And U.S. efforts to destabilize Nicaragua through *contra* terror and economic warfare are having unforeseen conse-

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quences in Honduras. Popular discontent and a disintegrating economy are much more evident there than in Nicaragua.

JAMES I. MULLINS
Miami, Florida

To the editors:

I am writing to express my admiration for Robert Leiken's excellent piece on the realities of Sandinista Nicaragua. His article appears at a time when the American public, and especially the liberal intelligentsia, still entertains many illusions about the nature of that regime, identical to those entertained in the past about other Marxist-Leninist dictatorships.

Mr. Leiken is to be congratulated for his honesty, courage, and intelligence and for his willingness to incur the displeasure of those who decided that Sandinista Nicaragua is the latest, authentic embodiment of their hopes and dreams. The current crop of delusions about Nicaragua have all the elements of past delusions about Stalin's Russia, Mao's China, and Castro's Cuba: limited access to information, conducted tours, selective perception, the wish to believe, the commitment to discover—at long last—an authentic incarnation of socialism, and the enemies-of-my-enemies-are-my-friends mentality.

PAUL HOLLANDER
Amherst, Massachusetts

To the editors:

Congratulations on the Robert Leiken article. Nicaraguans have been saying the same things since late 1980; they have been killed and exiled for saying them. Perhaps now they will be believed. Because Nicaraguans have not been believed, there is now in fact the "full scale civil war" which Mr. Leiken still hopes to "avert."

The problem is no longer to avert a war but to seek channels that will permit the warriors to express their outrage and desire for democracy in nonviolent ways. The armed opposition are Nicaraguans, many civilians, many former ex-Sandinista army and militia who have learned that *no* F.S.L.N. promise is to be believed, and that no authentic election can take place without threatening them with an armed movement. What is needed is a bipartisan effort that supports the same people that were supported in 1979: the non-Marxist-Leninist Sandinista groups that demand a return to the 1979 promises and commitments.

GERALDINE O'LEARY DE MACIAS
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Leiken replies:

Mr. Farach's is the latest, but surely not the last, of "Nicaragua's Untold Stories." I so titled my article to indicate that I was focusing on what many North Americans (unlike Europeans and Latin Americans) have not heard about Nicaragua. It is simply not true, by the way, that my article "ignores" U.S. covert actions, as Mr. Bonner claims. In any case, these actions are certainly no secret to the U.S. public. One of the liabilities of the Reagan policy is precisely that it enables the Sandinistas to present themselves as victims rather than as victimizers.

Double standards abound on both sides. Sandinista opponents assail attacks on the Miskitos, while ignoring state-sponsored repression in Guatemala, El Salvador, Paraguay, Chile, etc. Sandinista sympathizers argue that an armed insurgency of 12,000 people in El Salvador (population: 5 million) could not be created from the outside, but ignore the internal origins of the more than 12,000-man insurgency in Nicaragua (population: 3 million).

Mr. Bonner says that I have ignored U.S. economic pressures. In fact I say in the article that "the war and U.S. sanctions have compounded a mess created by the Sandinistas themselves." The United States could hardly have blocked I.M.F. loans to Nicaragua, since Nicaragua has never applied for any. Moreover in 1980 commercial banks waived requirements for a Nicaraguan agreement with the I.M.F. in reaching a very generous loan arrangement. Such a waiver is something that countries like Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina have been unable to achieve. While it is true that the United States vetoed I.D.B. Special Operations Fund loans to Nicaragua, the I.D.B. continues to lend to Nicaragua through its regular fund.

Mr. Bonner also charges that I ignore Sandinista progress in health care. Altogether in 1979-81 Nicaragua received $1.6 billion in international assistance, permitting major advances in public health. Later, when the Sandinistas ruptured the revolutionary alliance and pursued policies which shrank agricultural production and private investment, an economic and health crisis ensued. Falling production created a balance of payments deficit, making food and medicine scarce. By October 21, *The Washington Post* was reporting that "in Jinotepe, women rummaged through the garbage recently to salvage medicine thrown out by doctors because it was out of date."

Mr. Domingo Sanchez, the Marxist-Leninist leader of the minuscule Nicaraguan Socialist Party, does not share Mr. Bonner's view that corruption exists only among "a few" Sandinista officials. He "rarely fails to complain about the excesses" said to "characterize their private lives" and states that "there is arrogance and abuse of every sort. This is hardly revolutionary conduct and people are very aware of it." (*The New York Times*, October 7, 1984.) The extent of "decadence in the Reagan Administration" is irrelevant. The Sandinistas claim to be a revolutionary vanguard. The terrible privations and suffering of the Nicaraguan people demand that their vanguard be a model instead of spreading cynicism. Sanchez also agrees with me that many of the C.D.S.s "are run by people who served as neighborhood spies during the Somoza regime."

It's true that rifles have been furnished to Nicaraguan militiamen, just as, in El Salvador, rifles have been given to ORDEN and to government militias both there and in Guatemala. But only at the battlefront are Nicaraguan militias provided ammunition. Even there, desertions have been widely reported, and country-wide draft resistance is universally acknowledged. And as my article states explicitly, we talked not with "two graduates" of the literacy program, but with every graduate in two villages and many in "larger cities."

Mr. Bonner makes no comment on my account of the opposition demonstration in Chinandega, virtually unreported by American journalists, which was the heart of my article. If concerned journalists like Mr. Bonner would only pursue their task with more objectivity, articles like mine would be unnecessary and there would be fewer "untold stories." Perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of Mr. Bonner's confusion of journalism with political advocacy is the support it lends rightist efforts to discredit those American journalists who do provide critical but objective accounts of U.S. policy in Central America.

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2 **CORRESPONDENCE** ..... Telling Nicaragua's untold stories, &c.

6 **TRB FROM WASHINGTON** ..... ALL ABOARD
How the press got railroaded in 1948.

7 **THE EDITORS** ..... THE OTHER RACES
Our choices in key House and Senate contests.
TAX REVOLT II
Democrats, take heed: The tax revolt is back.
NOTEBOOK

9 **MARC GRANETZ** ..... DEREGULATION RODEO
Are Reagan's rulebusters about to go hog wild?

13 **DAVID A. BELL** ..... DOWN TO THE WIRE
The latest word on key races across the nation.

14 **KATHERINE FULTON** ..... THE HELMS HUNT
A scion of the New South vs. a fossil of the Old.

18 **JACK BEATTY** ..... THE JOHN & RAY SHOW
John Kerry has the pedigree of a Massachusetts Senator. But a guy named Shamie might beat him.

21 **MORTON KONDRACKE** ..... CALL TO GLORY
Our man on the debate panel makes himself a household name—at least for ninety minutes.

22 **KIKU ADATTO** ..... HOW THE WHITE HOUSE WAS WON
The cultural appeal of Ronald Reagan, maverick.

25 **SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL** ..... THE EVE OF DESTRUCTION
With Armageddon looming large, Mondale's facts were incinerated by Reagan's utopia bomb.

27 **JOHN B. JUDIS** ..... ROCKY ROAD
Jay Rockefeller is buying a Senate seat—just like any other ordinary West Virginia pol.

28 **BASIL TALBOTT JR.** ..... PURSUING PERCY
Why Mr. Liberal Republican is running scared.

32 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ..... ON FILMS: THE SCOTS HA' A WORD FOR IT
Comfort and Joy charms; *Garbo Talks* is gimmicky.

34 **EDWARD ROTHSTEIN** ..... ON MUSIC: MOZART À LA MODE
Peter Sellars's updated *Cosi fan Tutti,*.

38 **ROBERT PASTOR** ..... THE PROBLEM OF PUERTO RICO
A crisis over the island's future has divided Puerto Ricans, and should worry Americans.

43 **DAVID LODGE** ..... SEX AND LOATHING IN SCOTLAND
1982 Janine,
Unlikely Stories, Mostly
by Alasdair Gray

44 **MARK HALLIDAY** ..... POEM *Work*

46 **PAUL FUSSELL** ..... A BOY AND HIS WAR
Empire of the Sun by J. G. Ballard

48 **ANN HULBERT** ..... THE MEMORY OF A MAN
Home Before Dark by Susan Cheever

50 **WASHINGTON DIARIST** ..... THE END IS NIGH

COVER photographs of Ronald Reagan, Walter Mondale, and Morton Kondracke by Shepard Sherbell. Articles begin on page 21.

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FROM WASHINGTON

ALL ABOARD

Harry Truman had the poor taste in 1948 of getting elected when all the reporters in Washington said he couldn't. What was worse, we had written advance stories that came out after the election. I was on the Truman Special Train, and *Newsweek* had polled the reporters—all fifty aboard—and they unanimously said Dewey would win. There was a relaxed feeling because it was so evident. There hasn't been an election till this one in 1984 in which the pundits were so certain.

In this column I had described the two Philadelphia conventions, one where Republicans nominated Tom Dewey; the other where Truman got the nod from the Democrats. I made an attempt to appreciate Dewey but wrote on June 28, 1948, "when we saw again his bottle brush mustache, and his toothy smile, his dimples and mannequin face, we couldn't love him. His fine resonant voice soared out and there wasn't any warmth in it. The words were appropriately humble, but the speaker seemed to us cool, calculating and supremely self-confident."

(TRB is on vacation. This column is written by the previous TRB, Richard L. Strout.)

Then Truman came to the Democratic Convention. They kept him waiting in the humid cellar (this was before air conditioning) until the formalities of nomination were over. When he appeared he wowed the convention with a fighting speech. TRB wrote, July 24:

> Harry Truman may not have given his party a victory in Philadelphia, but he gave it self-respect, and it was fun to see this scrappy little cuss come out of his corner fighting at 2 in the morning, not trying to use big words any longer but being himself and saying a lot of honest things that needed to be said. . . . And there was real splendor in the way Truman took over that convention. As we wrote last week, "He is a stronger campaigner than a lot of people realize."

This was all very discerning; the trouble was that I, too, knuckled under and wrote an advance TRB just before Election Day describing Mr. Dewey's election "victory" in the past tense.

There was little tension on the Truman whistle-stop Special itself in 1948; we knew the result so we could relax and enjoy ourselves. A reporter, as he joined the train, whispered one question in the press section, "Does he know?" We answered guardedly that nobody could figure out whether Truman really understood the disaster. You couldn't tell by listening to him. I have the mimeographed White House itinerary before me now, labeled "Trip of the President" from Washington, Friday, September 17, 1948, 11:05 A.M. E.D.T. "Train will leave from Track No. 16," the schedule said, and would return "Saturday, October 2, 1948, at Washington 10 A.M. Daylight." It spells it out, right across the country. Take Tuesday, September 28: rear-platform appearances and greetings at Bonham, Bells, Dennison, Gainesville, Marietta, Ardmore, Davis, Pauls Valley, Purcell, Norman, Oklahoma City, and so on. Television hadn't come in yet. Margaret Truman was aboard and Mrs. Truman joined at Des Moines.

Truman included autobiographical scraps and got cornier and cornier as he traveled; he told audiences he was going West to receive an honorary degree, and he told accusing Republicans that his political record was pure. I have the transcript of what he told them at Shelbyville, Kentucky, where a love interest entered the family story that Truman regularly recounted to listeners.

continued on page 49

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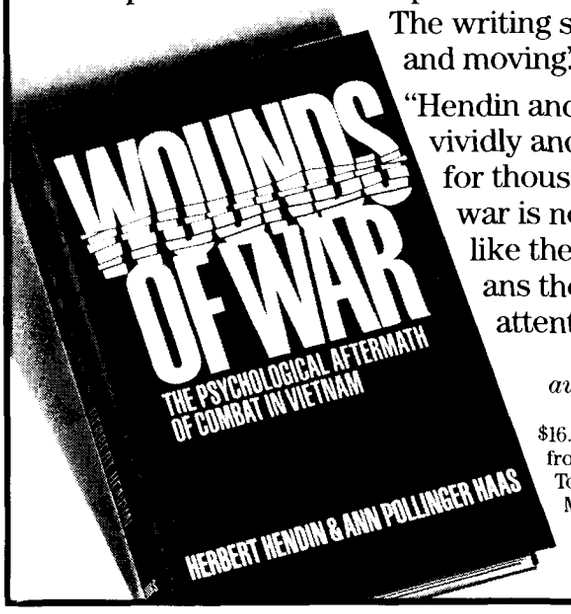

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
NOVEMBER 12, 1984

THE OTHER RACES

For some time now there has been a theory kicking around that 1984 is going to be the year in which American politics "realign" in favor of the Republican Party. Until a month before Election Day, that theory was gaining momentum as fast as Air Force One at full throttle. According to the theory, a Reagan *tsunami* would sweep the Republicans not only to strengthened control of the Senate but even, perhaps, to control of the House for the first time since 1948. (At a minimum, it was assumed, the ideological coalition of Republicans and conservative Democrats that passed Mr. Reagan's budget and tax plans in 1981 would come roaring back.) The election would bring a shift in ideological and party dominance as fundamental as the one caused by Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1936 landslide.

Then came Louisville, where the electorate discovered what happens when Ronald Reagan has to debate without peeking at the other guy's briefing book. Mr. Reagan's poor performance and Walter Mondale's good showing in the October 7 debate silenced a lot of the talk about realignment. With Mr. Reagan's help, Mr. Mondale restored both the self-esteem and the public image of the Democratic Party in a single stroke. "Fightin' Fritz," Gary Hart found himself declaring without noticeable irony, "made me proud to be a Democrat"—underscoring, perhaps, that the pre-debate Mondale was having exactly the opposite effect on most members of his party. The campaign, one Mondale aide said, had been seen as being "between a giant and a dishrag"—and although this perception was grossly unfair, it was hurting the chances of Democratic candidates across the board.

After that first debate, Mr. Mondale's favorable poll rating soared by 19 points, to a level approaching Mr. Reagan's own. The second debate, on October 21, had a less dramatic impact. In our view, the debate showed quite plainly that the President's grasp of foreign policy issues is extremely tenuous. Mr. Mondale, by contrast, expressed himself coherently. He also outlined an approach to foreign policy that is somewhat firmer and more realistic than his campaign for the nomination and the recent history of his party in this area might have led one to expect (one begins to wonder what the candidate himself really thinks). In strictly political terms, however, the conventional wisdom—that all-powerful, all-seeing entity—has decreed that because Mr. Mondale did not "score a knockout," his Presidential candidacy is finished. This time, alas, the conventional wisdom may even be right. Even so, the Democrats are clearly in better shape than they were before the round of debates began. Democratic candidates worry less about being dragged down by the perception that their party's standard-bearer is so weak as to be incapable of governing the country. They can stand or fall on their own merits.

And this year's Democratic candidates stack up reasonably well against their Republican opponents. One reason to prefer them is simply that in so many of this year's races, the Republicans are offering voters the same brand of Bible-thumping reaction that they did in 1980 and 1982. Another is that a vote for Democrats is a vote for balance. In the still overwhelmingly likely event that Mr. Reagan is reelected, Democrats can check the more retrograde tendencies of the White House (and of the Newt Gingrich types in the House and Senate)—particularly when it comes time to confirm Supreme Court nominees and to grapple with the tax code.

To be sure, these are basically negative reasons to vote Democratic. We wish we could muster more enthusiasm. The Democratic Party is, as ever, the country's best hope for economic fairness and practical social justice. But it has become burdened by a host of silly ideas—from a Peace Academy to comparable worth. Nostrums have been fixed upon especially uncritically in the field of foreign policy, where the nuclear freeze, for example, has achieved the status of party dogma. (Under pressure from the President in the debate, Mondale emptied the freeze of all its policy content. It is now the Humphrey-Hawkins bill of arms control: a pious attitude without substance.) Until the party learns to curb its tendency to latch on to such notions, we will maintain (as we did in our endorsement of Mr. Mondale three weeks ago) that the single best reason, alas,

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to be for the Democrats is the Republicans. In short, our support of the party's candidates is a calculated gamble—a wager that the benefits to the country of checking Reaganism outweigh the benefits to the party that would result if the Democrats were forced to spend another four years in political exile, rethinking their ideas and searching their souls.

AT PRESENT, the Republicans hold a 55 to 45 advantage in the Senate. But of the 33 seats being contested this year, 19 are currently held by Republicans, which makes the restoration of Democratic control a plausible long shot. The most important race is in North Carolina, where Governor Jim Hunt is running against Senator Jesse Helms. Mr. Hunt may be the most accomplished Democratic challenger in any Senate race; he would be an attractive candidate even if his opponent weren't one of the most loathsome demagogues since Theodore Bilbo. Under Mr. Hunt's leadership North Carolina has made outstanding progress in education, economic development, and civil rights.

Also high on our list is Lieutenant Governor John Kerry of Massachusetts, whose Republican opponent, a genial millionaire rightist called Ray Shamie, has been busy lately trying to play down his past connections with the John Birch Society. In New Hampshire, Democratic Representative Norman D'Amours deserves to win his close race with Senator Gordon Humphrey, another Helms clone who has begun soft-pedaling his ideology. Senator Roger Jepsen of Iowa is backward on the issues, and his stature as a public official—none too imposing to begin with—has been reduced to the vanishing point by a series of farcical peccadilloes. This is enough to make us go for Mr. Jepsen's Democratic challenger, Representative Tom Harkin—though we disagree with Mr. Harkin's opposition to military aid for El Salvador. In Texas, we prefer Democrat Lloyd Doggett, a wily legislator and a good, old-fashioned liberal populist, over Phil Gramm, a populist of an altogether more ugly sort. And we're glad to see polls that show David Pryor of Arkansas, Albert Gore of Tennessee, and Carl Levin of Michigan well ahead of their right-wing opponents. Finally, we hope for improved fortunes for Edythe Harrison in her bid to unseat Republican John Warner (remember Liz and John?) in Virginia.

There are a few liberal Republicans left, but they are a dying breed, and as members of a Senate majority dominated by right-wingers they have lost most of what legislative leverage they once had (although die-hards like Lowell Weicker of Connecticut and Bob Packwood of Oregon have performed admirably and effectively in fights over school prayer and abortion). As a buffer against Mr. Reagan's worst tendencies they are no substitute for a Democratic majority. Thus political balance is the main reason we hope Libby Mitchell unseats Republican Bill Cohen in Maine (the only poet in the Senate), and Joan Growe unseats Rudy Boschwitz in Minnesota. We also wish Representative Paul Simon well against Senator Charles Percy in Illinois, who has not simply been critical of Israel but downright hostile over many years. Mr. Simon's success in fashioning a liberal coalition in his state show that he is a politician of principle and ability. Mark Hatfield of Oregon faces Democrat Margie Hendricksen, who espouses defense policies (like a *unilateral* nuclear freeze) beyond even Mr. Hatfield's silliest dreams. Still, we're for her, if only because Mr. Hatfield's self-righteous posturing has gotten particularly grating since the scandal over his wife's accepting $50,000 from a Greek pipeline tycoon who benefited from a bill Mr. Hatfield promoted. Shabby.

About three-fourths of all House seats are not being seriously contested in this election. This lamentable index of declining political competition is partly due to the attention incumbents pay to bread-and-butter "constitutent service," but it can also be traced to the growing influence of political action committees. PAC money, particularly business PAC money, flows most freely to incumbents—regardless of party—because incumbents, already possessed of power, visibility, and committee assignments are the most prudent investment PACs can make. This raises the financial threshold beyond the reach of most would-be challengers. Perhaps the classic example of a PAC-bolstered House incumbent is Bob Michel of Illinois, the Republican House Minority Leader, who has over $230,000 in PAC money—and no serious opposition.

Where seats are being contested, there are some genuinely important races. Perhaps the most important is in Oklahoma's First District, where Jim Jones, the moderate, effective Democratic chairman of the House Budget Committee, is trying to hold off a Reagan Republican named Frank Keating. (We hope he does.) Another significant race is the one in Mississippi's Second District, where state Representative Robert Clark is taking a second crack at Republican Webb Franklin—and at the honor of becoming that state's first black Representative since Reconstruction. It's an honor we think Mr. Clark, a seasoned legislator with a strong record on education, deserves. And we'd like to see California Democrat George Brown, a leader of the opposition to the Administration's "Star Wars" nuttiness, win his race against Reaganite John Paul Stark.

The realignment scenarios never did strike us as terribly plausible. As the political analyst Kevin Phillips has pointed out, reelections of elected Presidents in this century have been accompanied by an average gain of only five Congressional seats for the party in the White House. Mr. Phillips argues that, far from confirming the triumph of the conservative movement, the 1984 elections may turn out to be an "ideological Indian summer." This election may very well prove to be the last united hurrah of a Republican Party that is poised for fratricide between its New Right and traditional conservative wings, and which is also likely to founder in the event of a recession during a second Reagan term. If this happens, the Democrats ought to be in a good position to gain politically, particularly since twenty of the thirty-three Senate seats to be contested in 1986 are now held by Republicans. We hope that by then the Democrats have also developed new and effective ideas for governing the country.

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TAX REVOLT II

The tax revolt is back, with a vengeance. Tax-cutting referenda are on nine state ballots this fall, and some of them go even further than did California's famous Proposition 13, six years ago. Three of the referenda most likely to pass—Proposition 36 in California, Michigan's Proposal C, and Nevada's Question 12—would require all state and local revenue-raising proposals to be submitted for a public vote. The Michigan and Nevada measures would allow a simple majority to kill any tax rise; in California, where the new law might apply even to higher bus fares or hospital fees, it would take a two-thirds majority. Either way, it's a bad idea.

The referendum is a curious institution. It is a relic of the era of progressive reform, but the gilded-age abuses it was designed to counter were mostly reformed out of existence long ago. Government by plebiscite is unwieldy, uninformed, and capricious; it is the ultimate in single-issue politics. A referendum takes a complex public issue and reduces it to a single (and often loaded) yes-or-no question. The give and take of political transaction is simply annihilated. The referendum, in short, is inimical to the spirit of representative democracy.

Referenda are especially ill-suited, and legislators especially well-suited, to the task of financing a state government. Yet the leaders of the new tax revolt deny precisely that representative government has any legitimate role in fiscal matters. Richard Chrysler, director of Michigan's Voters' Choice Coalition, says, "government continually wants more intervention in our business. . . . Now we want participation in their business." There is another way to participate in government, of course: elections. But the tax rebels have lost their confidence in elections, too. Richard Headlee, a former Michigan Republican candidate for governor, and the sponsor of several earlier tax-cut measures, derides legislators as the "elected representatives of special interests." Howard Jarvis, now pushing Propostion 36, complains that "legislation is decided by a very few people." As Richard Hofstadter remarked twenty years ago, when people feel "that they have no access to political bargaining or the making of decisions, they find their original conception of the world of power as omnipotent, sinister and malicious fully justified." The tax rebels fit this pattern.

The ballot measures deserve to fail, but they do reflect a genuine popular grievance. The tax system at all levels is getting more inequitable. (For example, families of four at the poverty line now pay twice as much federal income tax as they did in 1980). Mr. Mondale has talked a lot about tax equity; unfortunately, his deficit reduction plan basically just tinkers with the tax code. There is a comprehensive tax reform proposal on the table: the "Fair Tax" bill proposed by Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey and Representative Dick Gephardt of Missouri, which would simplify taxes, ease the burden for lower-income families, and eliminate shelters for the affluent. But the Democrats seem disinclined to promote it. We hope they drop their reluctance. The alternative, we're afraid, will be to cede the banner of tax justice to the self-styled conservative populists—the foremost of whom is Ronald Reagan.

NOTEBOOK

□ TWENTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "A whale on a beach is scarcely at a greater disadvantage than a bomber grounded at its base. That lesson of the vulnerability of power caught out of its element was rubbed in on the American consciousness when Viet Cong raiders sneaked up on the Bien Hoa field near Saigon, lobbed mortar shells into the parked aircraft, killing four Americans and destroying or damaging half of the 40 B-57s which the U.S. had deployed to South Vietnam after the first Gulf of Tonkin shooting last August. The Pentagon had an explanation. Perimeter defense at Bien Hoa had been left to Vietnamese forces, and—well, there just had not been any. The next order of business, the Pentagon suggests, is to consider the advisability of having U.S. forces take over responsibility for peripheral security of installations at which sensitive American equipment is harbored. So the U.S. edges away from an 'advisory' role in Vietnam toward clear military involvement. Someday there will be a guerrilla raid on forces under U.S. command. The raiders will be pursued. The pursuers will be ambushed. The ambuscade will call for retaliatory measures. The retaliation will draw a counter retaliation—and so on up the scale. A decision to assume peripheral security has grave implications, for perimeters in a place like South Vietnam can prove deep indeed. With the mortar raid, the war seems to have taken a new turn, moving the U.S. closer to a choice the President cannot evade: getting out or getting in deeper." ("Escalation In Vietnam," The Editors, November 14, 1964.)

Reagan's rulebusters get ready to ride.

DEREGULATION RODEO

TWO DAYS AFTER taking office, Ronald Reagan established the Presidential Task Force on Regulatory Relief. Headed by Vice President Bush, the task force was to spearhead the Administration's reform of government regulation, which was to be the fourth major goal of their economic recovery program after cutting taxes, reducing spending and stabilizing monetary growth. In August 1983 the task force issued its second and final report, and

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vanished when Congress was out of session. Bush's counsel, C. Boyden Gray, explained that the task force's work was done.

Of course, it wasn't. The Reagan reformers hadn't lost any of their deregulatory religion, though; the task force had been disbanded because deregulation had become a political liability and this election was already looming. Public reaction to the Environmental Protection Agency (E.P.A.) scandal involving Anne Gorsuch Burford was virulent; environmentalists had aroused widespread opposition to James Watt's initiatives at the Department of the Interior; consumers were protesting the relaxation of safety and health standards. In a second term, perceiving a mandate to pick up where they left off, the Reagan Administration will reopen their deregulatory rodeo.

It's not too surprising that such a fear, quieted as it was by the Administration's backing off, did not become a major election issue; the word "deregulation" makes most folks yawn. But the forty regulatory agencies in the executive branch and the eighteen independent regulatory commissions in Washington touch our lives more directly and in many more ways than do most foreign affairs, Supreme Court decisions, or even Congressional actions. Familiar initials like the F.D.I.C., S.E.C., F.D.A., OSHA, and the F.T.C. stand for agencies that regulate the money we deposit in the bank or invest in securities, the price we pay for fuel, the purity of the food we eat, the level of safety at the places we work, the integrity of the advertisements we're bombarded with, the reliability of the airplanes we fly in and the trucks and cars on our highways, the side effects of medications we purchase, and the safeness of all sorts of products we buy.

WHY DEREGULATE? First, because the haphazard growth of agencies has produced a lot of ridiculous regulations. Examples cited by Richard Neustadt during the Carter years: unregulated truckers needed an I.C.C. certificate to haul railroad ties made from logs sawed lengthwise but not for logs sawed crosswise; one federal agency required a meat-packing plant to clean its floors several times a day while another agency told it to keep its floors dry at all times to reduce the risk of slipping. A second reason is more pressing: new technologies have strained or made obsolete the mandate of several agencies. The most obvious example is the Federal Communications Commission (F.C.C.), which was established by a communications act that didn't envision cable TV, much less microwave, or direct-broadcast satellite technology. The third reason to deregulate is more general: regulation should be responsive to transformations of the national economy. Our economy is different than it was in the 1930s when the most "economic" agencies (those concerning industries) were established, and the 1960s and 1970s when a second wave of "social" agencies (those concerning health, workplace, safety, and the environment) were set up.

Pressure to deregulate has been building for years. The 1940s and 1950s brought greatly increased prosperity, which lessened fears about the market. Before long the agencies were being perceived as a distinct branch of government in need of systemic reform.

President-elect Kennedy persuaded James M. Landis, then dean of Harvard Law School, to survey the regulatory landscape. Landis, who as a Roosevelt New Dealer had been the architect of the S.E.C. and the author of a remarkable treatise in 1938 that eloquently justified the creation of the regulatory process, found the agencies in the 1960s inefficient, shortsighted, and too removed from Presidential control. A Nixon task force on regulatory reform was headed by economist George Stigler, who brought to government a strong dose of economics, Chicago-brand. President Ford made regulatory reform a priority of his Administration. So did Jimmy Carter, and his deregulatory legacy is substantial, especially considering the backlash among corporations to the growing social regulation of business.

Carter brought to Washington Alfred Kahn, author of the seminal 1974 book *The Economics of Regulation*. Kahn, who had been the successful chairman of the C.A.B., refashioned regulation in marginal cost terms. (Kahn once responded to an airline company executive who was trying to teach him about differences among planes that to him all planes were just "marginal costs with wings.") Carter was responsible for husbanding a 1978 airline deregulation bill, a 1977 natural gas bill to phase out price controls, the deregulation of security brokerage fees, the Clean Air Act amendments of 1979, the toxic substance control act, Superfund legislation, the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, partial deregulation of long distance telephone service, pay-TV, and cable; a 1979 order to phase out crude oil price controls, reductions of I.C.C. requirements in the railroad and trucking industries and financial deregulation in the form of interest-bearing checking accounts and eased restrictions on savings bank loans and interest rate ceilings for small depositors.

OF COURSE regulatory reform hasn't been all panacea. Airline deregulation, for example, has hurt people who live in small cities that national carriers have abandoned but that regional carriers aren't yet serving; it's aggravated travelers who would pay more not to contend with newly crowded airplanes and airports; and it's caused consumer paranoia about lowest possible fares.

But—to stick with airlines—the ill effects of deregulation are greatly outweighed by the fact that planes are fuller than ever, and with more new passengers than ever; on average, fares are lower and an increasing number of carriers are offering competitive service. The need for regulatory reform is overwhelming enough by now to have attracted bipartisan political and wide public support. The question, then, isn't whether deregulation is good or bad; that's a question specific to the industry or the initiative

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itself. The question is, what has this Administration done in the way of deregulation?

ANY ADMINISTRATION could have run with the deregulatory baton passed in 1980, but especially Reagan's, for which deregulation was practically a *jihad*. "We hit the ground running," said James Miller, a transition team principal then at O.M.B. Reagan froze all new regulations nine days after his inauguration. He issued Executive Order 12291, which turned the O.M.B. into a cost/benefit analysis clearinghouse for all new agency rules; and the O.M.B. cut agency budgets for good measure. Appointed to head executive-branch agencies were people committed to little enforcement: Thorne Auchter at OSHA, William Baxter at the Justice Department's Antitrust Division, John Crowell at the U.S. Forest Service, and Anne Gorsuch Burford at the E.P.A. To be commissioners at the ostensibly independent agencies Reagan appointed self-proclaimed free market ideologues like Miller at the F.T.C. and Mark Fowler at the F.C.C. (See "Love That Market," by Michael Pertschuk, TNR, May 14.)

As expected, proposals for reform came in a torrent: at OSHA, to eliminate nursing home rules concerning fire safety; at the F.D.A., to eliminate requirements for informational inserts in Valium and Darvon; at the F.C.C., to rescind licensing requirements, the Fairness Doctrine, the equal-time rules, and media-ownership restrictions.

Severe backlash quickly followed these "reforms." Initiatives at the health, environment, and consumer protection agencies were soundly criticized in the news media, and the Administration's threats to our environment and well-being have been unexceptionably documented in books with titles like *Dismantling America*, *Retreat from Safety*, *Revolt Against Regulation*, and *Poisons on the Job*. Actions at industry-regulating agencies have been scorned in *Fortune* magazine as being more "pro-business" than genuinely "pro-reform."

In its final report in 1983, the task force ballyhooed that its reforms would save consumers more than $150 billion before 1993. A superficial inspection of the report belies such swagger. Certainly there are some impressive gains in reduced paperwork requirements and new aid for small businesses. But smaller agency budgets and fewer new rules don't necessarily mean better regulation. And the reputed $150 billion is a list of wish fulfillments. In the first place, "current savings" account for only one-tenth of that figure; the other nine-tenths are even more speculative "potential savings" based upon the assumption that interest rates and other economic conditions will remain the same for the next ten years. Of the current savings, about half represent incremental interest to depositors which is attributable to Carter's financial deregulatory legislation; another one-sixth could be "reduced," according to a cryptic footnote in the report; half a billion dollars in savings is attributed to the recision of the air-bag safety requirement, which a federal court later threw out for being "arbitrary and capricious." The potential savings compound these miscalculations by ten: more than a quarter are based upon the Carter-legislation financial savings, and another $10 billion is attributed to the air-bag rule recision that never occurred. The billions to be saved by the suspension of water treatment regulations evaporated when the suspension was attacked for being promulgated before the required public hearings were held.

When the task force was disbanded, officials announced that even though the task force's work was done, the Administration's deregulatory campaign wasn't over. Was that a promise or a threat?

If it was a promise, then in a Reagan second term, we won't get the regulatory reform we so badly need. Not from Congress; this Administration has pushed through only one piece of significant legislation—the Garn-St. Germain Depository Institutions Act of 1982, and legislation is crucial to reduce court challenges to specific initiatives and to assure wide and diverse representation in the reform proceedings. Not from the agencies; their violations of administrative procedures have been frequent enough to have made many compromises with their constituents temporary. Not from the White House; among Reagan's deregulators there are no visionaries like Louis Brandeis or James Landes or Alfred Kahn. Their "vision" is merely pervasive cost/benefit analysis. For that reason, as ideological as these deregulators are, their efforts have been scattershot and mostly ineffective. There is no indication that in a second term they could do any better.

That's the good news. The bad news is that these deregulators threaten to do worse. Fowler would continue his myopic mission to rescind all sorts of F.C.C. regulations. That is particularly worrisome because the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, where most agency actions are brought, has been uniquely deferential to F.C.C. actions. Antitrust enforcement, now under J. Paul McGrath, may shrink to enforcement of only egregious cases of price-fixing, and that is particularly dangerous when other agencies are trying to free up the market for robust competition. The F.T.C. under Miller seems capable of anything; he opposed the regulation that requires funeral homes to post their prices. Under Commissioner Donald Dotson, the National Labor Relations Board, which this year ruled that companies no longer had to bargain with its workers over a decision or the *effects* of a decision to relocate a plant to a place where labor was cheaper, will continue its hit-and-run incursions into labor rights. The F.D.A. wants to try out a new approach to food approval that would use risk assessment techniques to approve additives that have a carcinogenic constituent. The E.P.A. wants to revise the level of acceptable-quality emissions. At the health and safety agencies, cost/benefit analysis will be practiced with a vengeance. Unable to restructure the regulatory building, this Administration's deregulators will be content to smash as many windows as they can. Take cover.

MARC GRANETZ

Marc Granetz, formerly the editor of New Republic Books, is a second-year student at Harvard Law School.

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Democrats gaining, Fritz straining.

DOWN TO THE WIRE

WALTER MONDALE'S bravura performance in the first debate may have lifted Democratic spirits and his solid showing in the second did nothing to dampen them, but there's still not much to cheer about. Although Mondale is swaying some undecided voters, he has not managed to reduce the solid majorities that Reagan enjoys in nearly every state. The best news for the Democrats comes instead from Senate and House races, where several key contests seem to be swinging their way.

The first debate seems to have done Mondale the most good in the Northeast. He still trails Reagan by 8 points in Pennsylvania, but has a 2-point lead in Massachusetts, and appears to be closing in Maryland. In New York he has finally managed to attract both large crowds and New York City Mayor Ed Koch to his side, and now trails by only 4 points. In New Hampshire, the Democrats may well pick up a Senate seat. Popular five-term Representative Norman D'Amours is rapidly gaining on Gordon Humphrey, a New Right favorite. D'Amours's success is boosting the chances of Congressional candidate Dudley Dudley.

Mondale's charge in the Midwest is probably too little, too late. In Michigan, although Mondale-Ferraro headquarters report that the rate of new volunteer sign-ups has doubled, no one's yet produced a poll showing that Reagan has lost the 17-point edge he held before the first debate. In Ohio, where Mondale's promise to raise taxes continues to rankle, the *Akron Beacon-Journal* reports that the President's lead has actually grown by 5 points since the first debate, to 17 percent. But in what was once regarded as a tight race, liberal Democratic Representative Ed Feighan is pulling away from Republican Matt Hatchadorian. In Illinois, meanwhile, even the Mondale campaign is reacting cautiously to a new Teichner poll showing Reagan only 2 points ahead. For the moment Mondale's best hope is his home state of Minnesota, where polls show him leading 51 percent to 45 percent. His new strength there isn't helping fellow Democrat Farmer-Laborite Joan Growe in the race for his old Senate seat, though, despite her sharp new attacks on incumbent Rudy Boschwitz for failing to disclose his tax returns. Still, the Democrats seem certain to pick up at least one Senate seat: either in Illinois (see "Pursuing Percy," p. 28), or in Iowa, where Democrat Tom Harkin has moved ahead of Roger Jepsen, whose latest claim is that Mondale would hurt Iowa cattlemen because "he doesn't eat red meat."

Reagan's lead is still unassailable in the South, though Democrats insist Mondale may yet move to within striking distance in Texas. In the Senate races, things are closer. In North Carolina, expenditures in the Hunt-Helms race have reached the $20 million mark ($13 million by Helms, $7 million by Hunt). Hunt recently withdrew a TV ad linking Helms to the Salvadoran death squads, but Helms is still running "actual footage of Jim Hunt voting to raise your taxes." (In fact, the spot shows Hunt voting for a nonbinding governors' resolution against the federal deficit.) The fireworks stirred record voter registration. In populous Mecklenburg County, 92 percent of eligible voters have registered. The outcome now hinges on which candidate can get more of his voters to the polls.

In Texas, meanwhile, Democratic pollster George Shipley says that Democrat Lloyd Doggett has surged into "a true horse race," with "born-again" Republican Phil Gramm. In Mississippi former Governor William Winter has frittered away whatever chances he once had to defeat the incumbent Republican Senator Thad Cochran. But state legislator Robert Clark, bidding to become Mississippi's first black Representative since Reconstruction, has overcome organizational problems and is now gaining on Webb Franklin. White Democrats may at last be moving to Clark; at a recent Clark fund-raiser featuring Gary Hart, 400 of the 600 guests were white.

Finally, Reagan still has a solid hold on the West, where good times and the President's personal popularity have long made his lead unassailable. In Oregon, the one Western state where Mondale seemed to have a chance before the debate, Reagan's lead has grown to 9 points. In California, Mondale has gained, but the latest Field poll still puts the President in front 50 percent to 40 percent. However, it now seems unlikely that Reagan will sweep a host of right-wing Congressional candidates along with him in the West. In California, for example, liberal Democratic Representative Jerry Patterson has pulled decisively ahead of right-wing challenger Bob Dornan. And in Idaho Representative George Hansen, the indicted right-wing crank, now seems likely to lose to Democrat Richard Stallings.

In short, Democratic self-confidence is growing, but that doesn't necessarily translate into vastly improved prospects for a Mondale victory. As it stands now, Reagan has a solid grip on enough midwestern, southern, and western states to guarantee him 215 electoral votes. The only states that are even leaning to Mondale are Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maryland, and Minnesota. Adding normally Democratic Hawaii and Washington, D.C., that gives him a base of 44 electoral votes. This means that Reagan can get a 270-vote Electoral College majority simply by winning any three of the six big industrial states (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, and Michigan), or by winning both California and Texas. Mondale needs to work a miracle.

DAVID A. BELL

Antony J. Blinken and Susan Subak provided research for this article.

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Stalking big game in North Carolina.

THE HELMS HUNT

Durham, N.C.

NEAR THE END of their third televised debate, the two most powerful politicians in North Carolina were bidding for the veterans' vote. Jesse Helms was arguing that he and Ronald Reagan best represent the interests of veterans. Jim Hunt was attacking the Senator for voting against veterans' benefits. Then it happened.

"Which war did you serve in?" Helms asked.

"I did not serve in a war," Hunt responded, barely containing his rage. "I don't like you challenging my patriotism, Senator."

"I haven't challenged your patriotism."

"Yes, you have. You know exactly what that question was calculated to do."

The debate went on. But Hunt never really recovered. The 47-year-old governor, who was too young to fight in Korea and too old to fight in Vietnam, had lost the cool he had been careful to maintain throughout the debates. Meanwhile, the 63-year-old Senator, who spent World War II in North Carolina writing press releases for the Navy, remained calm and confident. That exchange seemed to compress the whole campaign into a single instant. The Democrat had tried to talk issues; the Republican had deflected the blows through the skillful manipulation of emotive symbols. And there are few politicians more expert in manipulating such symbols (especially negative ones) than Helms. The Senator is a powerful symbol in his own right—a symbol of the ultraconservative *cum* fundamentalist wing of the Reagan coalition. It is because of Helms that—at the national level at least—conservatives and liberals alike view this race as the second most important in the nation.

Having Jesse Helms representing conservatives in the U.S. Senate is roughly equivalent to having an avowed Socialist representing the liberals. Helms wants to change our government fundamentally, making the United States essentially a Christian republic with a central government that takes responsibility only for national defense and supervising the morals of the citizenry. What's more, he has aligned himself with the most authoritarian right-wing politicians in the world. He was the only Senator to side with the Argentine generals in their war with Britain; he is a firm defender of the South African government; he is an enthusiastic backer of Roberto d'Aubuisson, the leader of the extreme right in El Salvador; and he has aligned himself with military dictatorships in Bolivia and Chile.

Yet, at home, Helms is viewed among perhaps a million of his constituents not as a radical but as a statesman who stands up for what he believes. Though he lacks Reagan's good looks, pragmatism, and acting ability, Helms has achieved power by meshing the themes of the Old South and the New Conservatism. Both share the same abhorrence of all things "liberal." Indict someone as a "liberal," and the case is closed.

On television and radio, at rallies, in fund-raising letters, Helms offers his evidence of Hunt's "liberalism." One brochure, for instance, lists these "dignitaries" who have supported the governor:

Andrew Young. He called Ayatollah Khomeini "a saint."
Jerry Brown. Nominated Jane Fonda for a California State Post.
Sol Linowitz. Negotiated the giveaway of the Panama Canal.
Norman Lear. Radical TV producer, Gay Rights activist.
Tip O'Neill. "I'm one of the biggest spenders of all time."

Sometimes, it has seemed as if Helms has done nothing in this campaign except hammer home his association with Reagan while incessantly calling Hunt a "Mondale liberal." In the third debate, Hunt got so tired of the label that he turned to Helms and said, "Jesse, I guess if you took those two words out of your vocabulary, even you would be speechless."

IN FACT, though, Hunt is not really a "Mondale liberal." He opposes the nuclear freeze, favors the death penalty, opposes tax increases, and goes to great lengths both to distance himself from Mondale and to align himself with a new generation of southern Democrats who have long favored balanced budgets and economic growth. He is the current champion of the Frank Porter Graham-Terry Sanford tradition of North Carolina politics: enlightened and moderate on race, fiscally conservative, and friendly to business. When Helms launched the second televised debate by accusing Hunt of hiding his position on the Martin Luther King holiday, Hunt replied, "Jesse, this is 1984. This is North Carolina. This is a progressive state. We're not going to go back now and open those old wounds."

But Helms's ploy plays well among the groups who are joined together by their hostility to liberalism. First, Helms appears to those North Carolinians for whom resentment of the federal government is nothing new. This is the Old South Helms was born in and knows best—the poor, segregated, family-oriented, fundamentalist, small-town South. When Helms opposes the Martin Luther King holiday or the Equal Rights Amendment, these voters get the message.

In addition, much of the business community is solidly behind Helms because he is solidly anti-union and pro-anything business wants. The Republican faithful back him, even when his crudity makes them uncomfortable, because the Republicans don't want to lose the Senate. Self-defined conservatives of any description back him because he is against the liberal big spenders. In short, Helms skillfully blends his Old South base with the newly resurgent free enterprise conservatism. He defends freedom, attacks government, promotes hard work, and believes in the American dream—what could be wrong with that?

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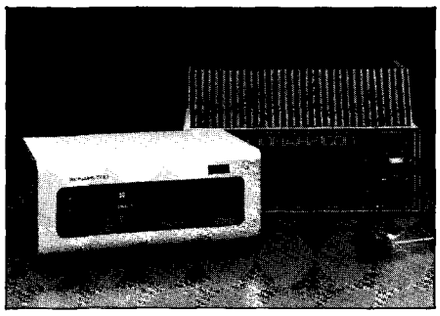
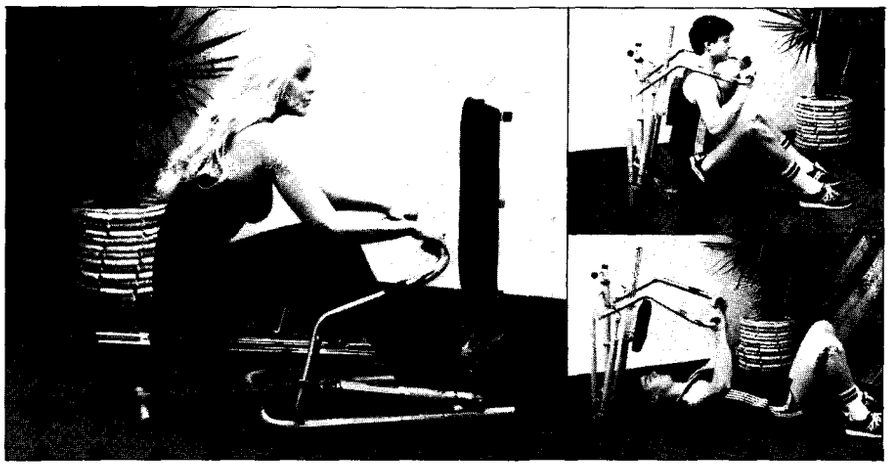


Air pollution doesn't politely stop at the front door. The Bionaire 500 is like moving a mountain breeze indoors. It removes 99% of all particulate pollutants from the air — goodbye to soot, dust, animal dander, pollen, cigarette smoke, smog, molds and fungi. Allergy sufferers breathe easier, everybody breathes more healthfully. The newly developed electret filter removes particles as small as 1/10,000 the thickness of a human hair. The Bionaire 500 cleans 45 cubic feet of air a minute, the average room three times an hour. It includes a switchable ion generator — negative ions are well-known for their presumed psychological good effects, creating a sense of well-being. A switchable fragrance dispenser allows you to add a fresh scent to the air when you wish. The Bionaire 500 measures 11″ x 7″ x 5″, uses only 45 watts energy, comes in a beautifully styled brushed aluminum case. The Bionaire 500 costs **$150.00** ($9.95) #A1227. A larger model 1000 has three speeds instead of two and cleans 118 CFM of air. This unit measures 14″ x 8″ x 8½″ with a lifetime steel housing. The Bionaire 1000 costs **$289.00** ($12.95) #A1229. An even larger model 2001, not shown, cleans 300 CFM of air and costs **$399.00** ($14.95) #A880. All models are UL-Listed and carry 1-year limited warranties.

ONE INCREDIBLE CLEANER

Simple Green is an oven cleaner. Bathroom cleaner. Window cleaner. Floor cleaner. Stain remover. Upholstery cleaner. Rug cleaner. Paintbrush cleaner. Engine cleaner. Simple Green is non-abrasive, non-caustic, low-phosphate and biodegradable. It has no bleach, ammonia or petroleum. It is approved by U.S.D.A. It was originally invented to remove stains from coffee-roasting equipment. Simple Green worked so well it was soon being used generally in the restaurant industry. Then in car washes. Then hospitals and airlines. Technically, Simple Green is a blend of synthetic penetrants that emulsify and suspend oil for cold-water rinse. It can be used on anything you use cold water on. No scrubbing required. We can send two 16 oz. spray bottles of Simple Green for **$9.00** ($2.95) #A698; two 16 oz. bottles plus a natural ocean sponge for **$12.00** ($2.95) #A828 or one gallon plus an ocean sponge for **$21.00** ($3.95) #A827.

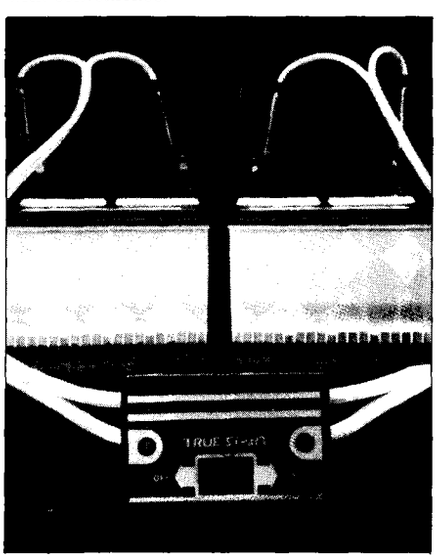
ROWING PLUS



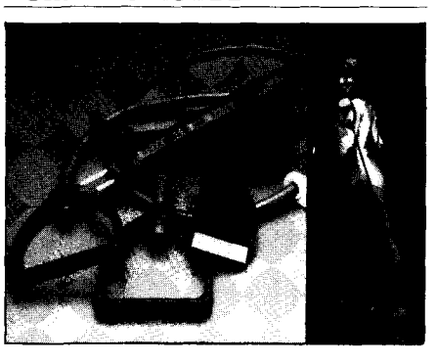
In less than two years, rowing has caught on as one of the most popular forms of home exercise — with good reason. It provides rhythmic aerobic exercise without the space needs of jogging or cycling. It exercises arms, chest, back, shoulders, legs and midriff at the same time — all the body's large muscles. It is private. It gives a complete workout faster than almost any other form of exercise. Now Vitamaster has taken a top-grade hydraulic home rowing machine and added a few clever refinements that turn it into a multi-action home gym. The MA-500 enables you to do shoulder presses, curls, bench presses, squats, arm extensions — all in addition to rowing. The result is a versatile economical exercise machine that meets the needs of the whole family. Tension settings are variable. One-twist height adjustment. Fold-up storage requires only 10″ depth. The MA-500 costs **$169.00** ($18.95) #A1251.

FOOLPROOF JUMPER CABLES

Because battery gases are explosive, there is always danger if sparks fly while you are connecting jumper cables. True-Start cables have a built-in solid-state electronic switch control that eliminates contact sparks by allowing current to flow only *after* all the connections have been correctly made. Safety signals also guarantee proper polarity alignment, so you don't have to worry about a voltage spike "cooking" sensitive ignition electronics or an expensive onboard computer. True-Start tangle-free cables are 16′ long with 400-amp heavily insulated clamps and cost **$45.00** ($6.95) #A1243 per set. They take the guesswork — and the hazards — out of jump-charging a battery, so you have confidence along with convenience.



PUMPING RUBBER



The Lifeline Gym may well revolutionize the exercise business. Quite simply it is the most space efficient, time efficient home fitness device on the market today. It allows you to simulate just about any of the exercises done on the expensive machines found in health spas and gymnasiums. The reason is rubber — a stretchable rubber cable of the type used on aircraft carriers. With this rubber cable, resistance increases with movement. This compensates for normal inertia and leverage gains, so your muscles are challenged through their full range of movement. The principal is known as *variable resistance* and it is at the heart of those fancy exercise machines. But the rubber is more effective yet. Because you have to resist its tendency to snap back on the return move, you gain a double benefit from your effort. You overcome positive *and* negative resistance in the course of each exercise. The Lifeline Gym is adjustable for individual strength levels and for different body-shaping intentions. It comes with its own carrying case and illustrated instruction/exercise book for **$36.00** ($3.95) #A748.

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TOOLS FOR LIVING®

A COLLECTION OF FIRST CLASS CONTEMPORARY MAILORDER PRODUCTS

When was the last time you learned the ins and outs of a product from a sales clerk? Tools for Living gives you high information value shopping. The products here have been researched, used and evaluated carefully and we provide all the relevant information. You can buy with the confidence of knowing exactly what you are getting — high quality, good value and satisfaction guaranteed.

DEEP HEAT RELIEF

Heating pads and hot water bottles mainly warm the surface of the skin — their heat does not penetrate deep into muscles and joints. Infrared heat goes deep beneath the skin to reach the actual site of inflammation and discomfort. It has been used for years by doctors and therapists, in place of medication, to gain natural relief of pain. Now there is a home unit, the Infralux, that allows you to apply infrared heat yourself, as often as you like. Fast (5-10 minutes), effective relief of pain from sinus headache, arthritis, bursitis, backache, neuralgia, sprains, muscular aches and pains. Perfectly safe to use. Hi/low settings. 6″ long. Plugs in normal household outlet. Comes with carry case for **$45.00** ($3.95) #A1175. Why take medications when you can get natural pain relief?

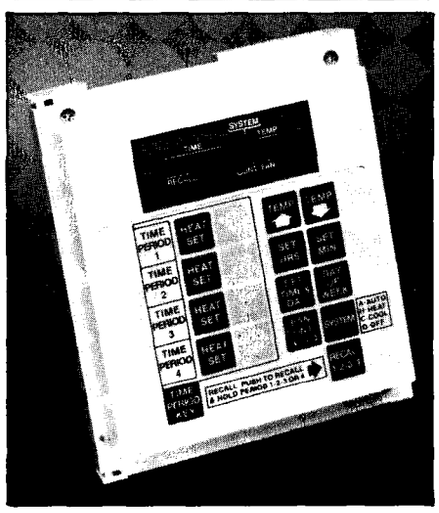
HOUSE HOSE

Do your houseplants run you ragged, back and forth, trip after trip, watering can in hand? What you need is an indoor garden hose to water them all in a single trip. The 50′ House Hose lets you take a splashless stream of water where you want it, with on/off and adjustable flow control right at the handle. Separate misting attachment. This improved House Hose comes with dripless adapters to fit most kitchen or bathroom faucets. Special hose tends to recoil after use, simplifying put-away. The House Hose costs just **$14.00** ($2.95) #A1254, two for **$25.00** ($3.95) #A12542. It makes watering as simple as turning on your faucet.

LUXURIOUS LAMBSWOOL

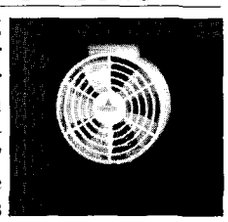
There is simply no sensation like it — the luxuriously comfortable feeling you get sleeping on a pure wool fleece underblanket. The deep springy pile molds to your body and distributes weight more evenly. The natural insulating qualities of wool help you sleep cooler and drier in summer, warmer in winter. Most people find within a few nights that they are sleeping better, more restfully than ever before. Our SuperSleeper is imported from New Zealand, and goes *under* your bottom sheet. Twin: **$119.00** ($8.95) #A1180. Full: **$149.00** ($10.95) #A1181. Queen: **$179.00** ($11.95) #A1182. King: **$219.00** ($12.95) #A1183.

THERMOSTAT THAT THINKS YEAR-ROUND



The average homeowner can save up to 25% a year on home cooling costs, 30% a year on heating costs. What it requires is coordinating air cooling and heating with actual patterns of use. The best expert helper you can find for this temperature-management task is the computerized Jade Thermostat Control. A built-in microprocessor lets you program up to four different temperature settings a day with different schedules for weekdays and weekends. Changeover between heating and cooling modes is automatic. Combined heat/cool setting range extends from 35° to 98°. Easy manual override if your normal schedule is interrupted. Continuous time and temperature display. Battery backup holds program 2 weeks should power fail. Homeowner installation takes approximately ½ hour (manufacturer offers toll-free advice if needed). Works with heat only and heat/cool systems, qualifies for Federal and State Energy Tax Credits, and costs **$99.00** ($4.95) #A1090. A companion model for two-stage heat pump installations costs **$159.00** ($5.95) #A1091. Three year warranty.

A FAN FOR ALL SEASONS



When you're using wood stoves or space heaters in winter or air conditioners in summer you're automatically creating "hot" and "cold" rooms. The trick is to disperse this warm or cool air uniformly throughout your home. The Con-Serv room-to-room temperature balancing fan does the job efficiently, quietly, economically. This little fan mounts high in the frame of a doorway and directs and balances air flow. Doors can still be closed and a reversible doorframe mount provides optional air direction. The Con-Serv temperature balancing fan has a two-speed 110-volt motor with a 10-foot cord. Weighs just 2 lb. 3 oz. and measures 5½″ x 5″ x 3½″. It costs **$25.00** ($4.95) #A1250. Two for **$46.00** ($6.95) #A12502.

HOUSEHOLD REGISTER

One of the first items to go in your home safe (or bank safe deposit box) is this household inventory register, which provides a record of personal property in the event of fire or theft. 100 pages of forms in handy ring binder allow you to record value and source of possessions for insurance purposes. Special sleeves have been included to hold up to 40 photographs. As the key to what you own, this 7″ x 9″ book could prove to be your *most* valuable possession. **$29.00** ($3.95) #A1237.

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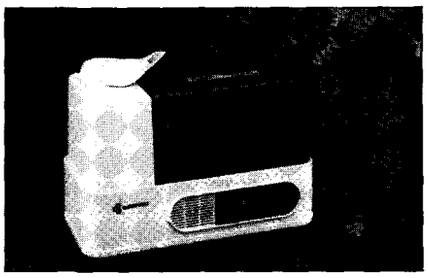
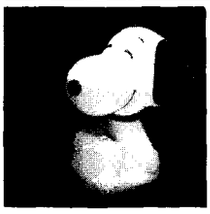
HEAVENLY HUMIDIFIER



Here's one of the hottest houseware products of the past decade. With good reason — the ultra-sonic humidifier does an important job extraordinarily well. Using extremely high-frequency sound waves, it breaks water molecules into a mist so fine that one tabletop unit humidifies an entire 1500 sq. ft. house or apartment. Operation is virtually noiseless — and completely safe (the vapor stream is cold, even though it *looks* like hot steam). The Samsung ultra-sonic humidifier unit shown here weighs 8½ lbs., measures 16″ x 8½″ x 12⅔″ with removable 1.3 gal. smoked acrylic reservoir fillable at any sink. Mist volume control allows selection of mist intensity and humidistat automatically turns unit on and off to maintain preselected humidity levels. Unit automatically shuts off when empty, emitting nozzle swivels 360°. **$109.00** ($10.95) #A1313.

NIGHTTIME BUDDIES



What could be friendlier nighttime company than one of these whimsical creations from Heller? Gladys Goose, 26″ high, surveys the scene with imperial hauteur, allowing no unpleasantness to draw near; Lite-up Snoopy*, 18″ high, camps in comfort, exuding cartoon beatitude. Each light made of blow-molded plastic, cunningly colored, UL-listed for use with 25w bulb. Gladys Goose costs **$29.00** ($5.95) #A1221, Snoopy **$29.00** ($5.95) #A1222.

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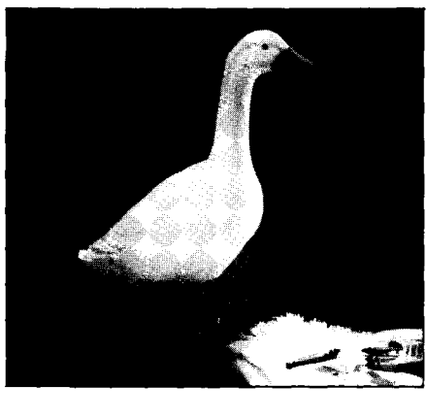
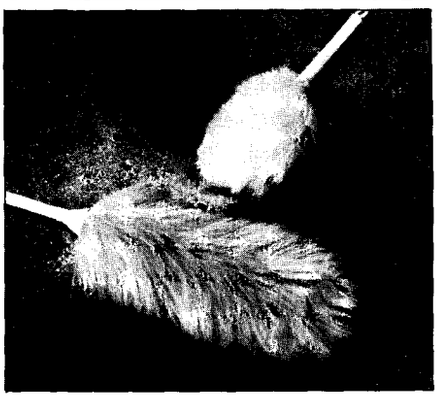
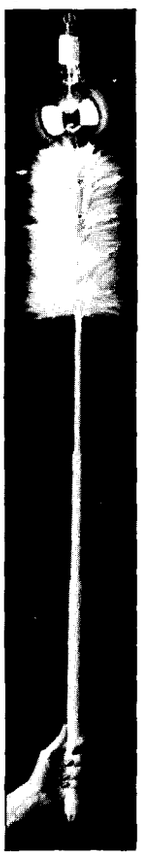


DUST MAGNETS™

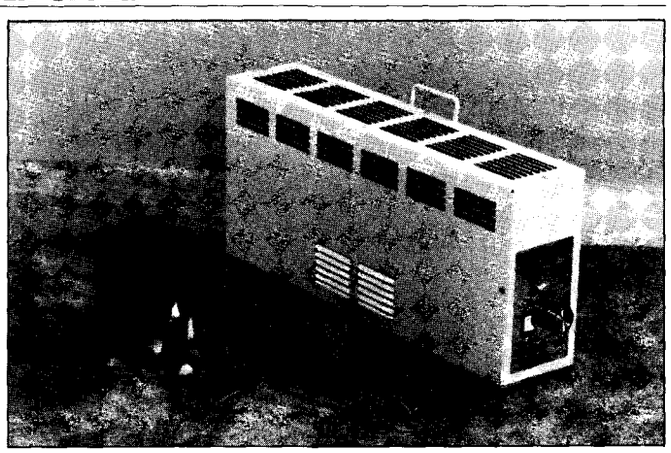


Tools for Living has introduced tens of thousands of people to the delights of lambswool dusting in the past two years. Lambswool puts the feather duster to shame by making dust literally leap off surfaces where it has accumulated. This magnetic attraction is just the thing for dusting bric-a-brac, china, crystal, pictures and other fragile items. Our dusters are imported from New Zealand where climate conditions produce the highest quality lambswool in the world! Our all-time favorite, the standard 27″ long duster costs only **$7.00** ($1.95) #A780. We offer our newest find, a telescoping duster, that extends to more than 4 feet! This *Tools for Living exclusive* is made with an extra heavy handle and collapses to 28″ for easy storage. **$12.00** ($1.95) #A1057. Buy both the standard and telescoping duster for the remarkable low price of **$19.00** ($1.95) #A1058 and we'll give you a bonus mini duster ($4.50 value) FREE!



ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS AND GUARANTEE: *We ship via United Parcel Service wherever possible to insure prompt delivery. The price of each item is shown followed by its shipping and handling charges in ( ). Be sure to add the item price* ***plus*** *shipping and handling charges for each item ordered to arrive at the* ***total price*** *of each item. If you are not satisfied for any reason, return the article to us within 30 days, and we'll exchange it or refund the cost, per your instructions.*

QUICKER HEATER-UPPER



Are you ready for the cold bathroom and bedroom floors that await you this fall and winter? The chilliness that creeps up on you when the thermostat is turned down? The new Porta-A-Steam heater uses a maintenance-free sealed steam system to get heat flowing where you need it in just 3 minutes. Draws only 1000 watts (compared to 1500 for oil-filled radiators and hot-wire heaters) yet provides room temperatures as high as 80°. Sturdy steel casing remains touchable at all times — no fear of burns or fires. Eminently portable, weighs only 12 lbs., measures 22″ x 10″ x 4¼″. Adjustable thermostat control, continuous fan operation to circulate warm air, safety cutoffs, 1-year warranty. Porta-A-Steam is the sensible supplemental heating alternative. **$79.00** ($10.95) #A1226 each. UL-approved. Ideal around children or pets.

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Outside North Carolina, the Helms-Hunt confrontation is viewed as a referendum on Jesse Helms and the New Right. But in the state, it has been largely a referendum on Jim Hunt.

In June 1983 the popular two-term governor held a 19-percentage-point lead. Slowly, under the assault of thousands of Helms radio and television spots, that lead dwindled and finally disappeared. The memorable closing line of the Helms ads—"Where do you stand, Jim?"—has succeeded in planting the idea that Hunt takes contradictory positions. On television, where by August Helms had run 11,000 thirty-second spots to Hunt's 4,000, Hunt has been pictured as being at once a "Mondale liberal" and a man who straddles the fence. Even though it is Helms who has been in Congress for more than a decade, he manages to portray himself as the outsider battling the godless liberals and Hunt as the governmental insider who cares only for his personal career.

Hunt's campaign has never settled on a consistent strategy. At first he seemed to ignore the Helms assault altogether by centering his campaign around the Four E's (most people remember that one of them was education, but everyone has forgotten economy, environment, and the elderly). Then, this summer, Hunt went on the attack with a television ad campaign focusing on Helms's friendship with El Salvador's rightist leader, Roberto d'Aubuisson. Pictures of death squad victims were flashed on the screen, and viewers were left with this comment: "*Now, Jesse Helms may be a crusader, but that's not* what our Senator should be crusading for." The Hunt ad campaign prompted a Helms supporter, Bob Windsor, the publisher of a free-circulation right-wing paper called *The Landmark* to lash back with an article headlined JIM HUNT IS SISSY, PRISSY, GIRLISH, AND EFFEMINATE, charging that Hunt had a homosexual lover. Hunt threatened to sue; Helms dissociated himself from Windsor; and Windsor retracted his unfounded charges. But some damage was done.

For a while both candidates backed off the rough stuff. But as the campaign heads into its final week, the two candidates and their well-financed media machines (Helms has raised $12.8 million, Hunt $7.2 million, making this the most expensive Senate race in U.S. history) are locked in increasingly desperate combat. In every speech, Hunt is charging that Helms is at the center of a "nationwide network of right-wing extremists" who "claim that they have a special mission to save America, and everyone who disagrees with them is considered an enemy." Stung, the Helms people say that they could strike back by attacking Hunt's supposed left-wing associations—"We could go back and do the same thing with the queers," in the delicate words of Helms's campaign press secretary—but, they add piously, they choose not to.

Since Jesse Helms scares and angers a lot of people, it seems like it ought to be easy to beat him. But so far, nothing has proved particularly effective. Hunt's stiff, serious, cautious style is no match for Helms's gutsy, folksy, grandfatherly image. Helms's ads are still putting the governor on the defensive, and nobody knows yet whether Hunt's new strategy will penetrate the Senator's armor.

Recent polls have shown one man leading, then the other, but the leads have been within the margin for statistical error. Most observers feel the race will be decided by three factors: the size of Reagan's victory in the state; who gets the vote out; and who sways the undecided voters (now put at around 10 percent), many of whom live in the suburbs and have voted for both men in the past.

With all the media hype surrounding the race, with all the advertisements jamming the voters' circuits, it's tempting to suggest that these two guys aren't worth all this trouble and expense. The stakes, though, are high. If Helms is reelected, the New Right will claim an outright victory for its views. Helms will have consolidated his power, which means he will use his Senate seat to continue pulling the political dialogue to the right. What's more, the unofficial foreign policy he has conducted for the past decade could become the Senate's official foreign policy. Helms says he's happy chairing the Senate Agriculture Committee and wouldn't accept the chairmanship of Foreign Relations. But if Charles Percy is defeated and the job opens up, the voice of God might well instruct this defender of the d'Aubuissons of the world to change his mind.

KATHERINE FULTON

Katherine Fulton is editor of *The North Carolina Independent*, a biweekly magazine based in Durham that covers the state's politics and culture.

All the way with J.F.K.?

THE JOHN & RAY SHOW

Boston

IT IS HARD not to be a tad cynical about a fellow who took to signing his papers "J.F.K." while in prep school; who then went to Yale, where he was recognized as *the* coming politician in the class of '66; who then volunteered for duty in the Navy and was sent to Vietnam and just happened to bring a movie camera along to film himself in action; who then, back from Vietnam, ran for Congress as an anti-war candidate, but lost; who then became a leader of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and as such made a celebrated speech (rumored to have been written by a former Kennedy aide) before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; who then tried to cash in on this celebrity with another run for yet another House seat, but lost,

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thanks to one of Richard Nixon's dirty tricks. Sounds like the biography of a young pol on the make, doesn't it?

But that attitude will recommend itself solely to those who take the aristocratic view of success—that it is just supposed to happen to you, like disaster. And only the inveterately hard-boiled will remain cynical about the three wounds the young pol suffered in Vietnam, or the Silver and Bronze Stars he won there for acts of valor. John Forbes Kerry has guts—just like John Fitzgerald Kennedy did. Before he's through, he may follow J.F.K.'s lead and try to parlay his nimbus of heroism, his handsome looks, his eloquence, his family fortune, and his Ivy League panache into a run for the Presidency.

First he has to get past Ray Shamie. Shamie is a rags-to-riches millionaire, a high-tech buccaneer. Yet if you're not handsome and your dad wasn't an important diplomat and you didn't go to St. Paul's and you don't have the guts to stand up to your boss (much less to the Vietcong), then you might find it a lot easier to identify with Ray than with John Kerry. The rich may be different from you and me, but the self-made rich are the cynosures of everybody's fantasy, and it's bad for our morale if they seem different. They owe it to the rest of us to be regular guys. Ray Shamie is as much a regular guy as his alter ego, Ronald Reagan.

Massachusetts voters will have to choose between this common touch, feel-good conservative and an Irish-Brahmin peacenik who is said to be as stiffly patrician in personal manner as another obstacle he's got to clear on his way to the top, Ted Kennedy.

A MONTH AGO, Ray Shamie was riding high, having beaten Elliot Richardson by 25 points in the Republican primary, and trailing Kerry, who is the lieutenant governor, by as few as 4 points in the polls. Lately a cloud has crept over his chances. Both *The Boston Globe* and *The Boston Phoenix* printed stories that detailed Shamie's past connections to the John Birch Society and other radical right groups. The *Globe* ran a front-page story about Shamie and the Birch Society and devoted two full pages inside to a leaked memo written two years ago by a Shamie campaign consultant. The memo amusingly refers to Shamie's Birch connections as "Fred," and warns that "Fred" could be trouble in the campaign. Also, the memo advises the purging of a library Shamie maintains at his firm, the Metal Bellows Company, a library which a former employee told the *Phoenix* is full of Birch material.

Shamie makes light of these charges, saying that he only attended one meeting of the Birch Society, saw how far right it was, and never went back. He is vague on when this meeting took place, but has admitted that, as late as November 1975, he invited some businessmen to hear a Birch official at a symposium held in his plant. "I've invited businessmen to meetings on a number of topics," he explained to *The Boston Herald*. "I've always felt that getting all sides of a story is very important." Shamie dismisses the Birchers as "sincere, patriotic, Americans—off on a tangent, sure, but they're certainly nothing to be ashamed of or frightened about." But, as if determined to destroy Shamie, the public relations director of the John Birch Society called a press conference recently to denounce Kerry for "near-treasonous activity" during the anti-Vietnam protests of the early 1970s. Shamie condemned the attack as "irresponsible and unsubstantiated," but it doubtless served to reinforce the impression that he is somehow linked to the Birchers.

Fred isn't Shamie's only problem. According to the former employee quoted by the *Phoenix*, Shamie's library subscribes to *Spotlight*, the publication of the far right-wing Liberty Lobby, which the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith calls "the best-financed anti-Semitic organization in the United States." Shamie went so far as to have free subscriptions of *Spotlight* sent to his employees, and at weekly management meetings praised the paper for telling the truth. The former employee, a Jew who fought in World War II and helped liberate the Buchenwald death camp, said that getting *Spotlight* in the mail was "like reading propaganda from Nazi Germany."

To be fair, it's no crime to read *Spotlight*, and ex-employees are not always the best witnesses for their former bosses. Still, will Ray Shamie repudiate the Liberty Lobby, or is it too made up of "sincere, patriotic Americans—off on a tangent, sure, but . . . certainly nothing to be ashamed of or frightened about"? Thus far, he has not answered. (I myself asked for an interview with Shamie and my call was not returned.)

On matters of public policy, Ray Shamie's beliefs faithfully echo Mr. Reagan's. He's against tax increases to cover the deficit—and for the MX, aid to the *contras*, the balanced budget amendment, school prayer, the death penalty, and merit pay for teachers. Shamie would make abortion illegal even in the case of rape and has suggested that rape victims immediately after being attacked should obtain a D & C (dilation and curettage), an operation that can prevent conception. In a recent debate with Kerry, Shamie criticized Reagan only on environmental policy (acid rain is a big issue in Massachusetts), and he was led by Kerry into admitting that about the only exception to his no-tax pledge would be a vote to re-authorize the Superfund program to clean up the nation's toxic dumps. Superfund is financed by a tax on producers of hazardous waste.

AFTER THE DEBATE, a friend of mine, a politically savvy lawyer of liberal inclination, confessed that Shamie had made a good impression on him: "Much of what he said made sense," he said. Much did—especially his witty dismissal of Kerry's ideas about the necessity of a business-government "partnership." Shamie spoke with the authority of a successful entrepreneur when he said that no businessman wants Uncle Sam as a partner (though he had to admit that his company once benefited from a low-interest government loan). On the other hand, he spoke nonsense on El Salvador, saying that "we should make every effort to find out *if* human rights violations are taking place down there [my italics]."

Perhaps because the debate was held under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce, Kerry, age 40, seemed

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less up for the occasion than Shamie, who is twenty years his senior. One perceived the advantages of the bumper-sticker mind as Kerry repeatedly got cut off for running too long in his answers, while Shamie finished his statements before his time was up. With his casual allusions to such esoterica as "the Garn bill," Kerry seemed the more knowledgeable, but in fact both men are political tyros. Shamie's only previous brush with politics was his 1982 Senate race against Edward Kennedy, an auto-da-fé for Republicans in which Shamie did better than any of his long-forgotten predecessors. And Kerry, who served for several years as an assistant district attorney of Middlesex County, has been lieutenant governor for only a year and a half.

John Kerry first ran for Congress in 1970, and to a pronounced degree his views remain those of a liberal of that day. ("I was a sponsor of Earth Day," he likes to say.) He is eager to cut the Pentagon budget. "You have to use the fiscal crisis," he told the *Globe*, "as a wedge to get a reduction in military spending. . . . When the crisis is over, you never get the kind of momentum back to change priorities." Kerry would vote to kill the MX missile, the B-1 bomber, the advanced cruise missile, and the Trident submarine, and he favors reductions in many categories of conventional arms as well.

In the Democratic Senatorial primary, in which Kerry beat Representative James Shannon by the narrowest of margins, Kerry positioned himself as an "outsider" who would not go along with business as usual in Washington, especially on the issue of war and peace. The memory and meaning of Vietnam is at the root of this commitment. As his friend and campaign adviser, John Kiley, told a writer for *The Boston Observer*, "The thing to know [about John Kerry] first and foremost is Vietnam . . . Vietnam changes all the questions of ambition and opportunism about John. There is a core of conviction that comes of Vietnam. . . . The power comes from the guilt and responsibility in knowing that you were asked to go to war for a mistake." Kerry would fight hard against any President's going to war for another mistake. He has hinted that he would filibuster any new nuclear weapons system. That would make him unpopular in the Senate club, but the networks would quickly make him a national figure—the first Senator from the Vietnam generation.

BEFORE THE PRIMARY, I talked to several watchers of Massachusetts politics about John Kerry, and I was puzzled that not one of them had a good word to say about him. One said that Kerry had had jaw surgery to make himself look less patrician. Another depicted Kerry as a sententious oaf, the sort of prig who gives speeches to his friends. A third said that Kerry was not liked by other politicians (yet, Boston's mayor, Ray Flynn, endorsed Kerry before the primary, and so did Shannon's colleague in the House, Barney Frank) and prophesied that he would have a hard time being accepted in the Senate. And the liberal *Globe*, in its editorial endorsing Shannon, called Kerry "righteous."

My friends were saying no more, really, than that they couldn't warm up to Kerry. Along with the *Globe*, they were criticizing his personality, not his character. Fair comment, perhaps, but hardly damning. In any case these people, residents of liberal Massachusetts who voted for Shannon in the primary, will be with Kerry in the general election. The harder question is whether the blue-collar voters in the cities will vote for him or for plain Ray. The primary results, I think, provide a clue. While Shannon won Brookline and Newton and Boston's Back Bay, liberal strongholds, Kerry carried Fitchburg and Worcester, South Boston, and Dorchester, places where physical courage and heroism are taken as pretty good marks of a man's character. The battle will be won or lost in these constituencies, as well as in the suburbs to the south of Boston, home of what Mark Shields calls "naturalized Republicans"—erstwhile urban Democrats who swamped the old Yankee Republican Party here to vote for Shamie in the primary. Kerry has tacked to this audience since the primary, softening his position on the "inevitability" of tax increases. But he can't convincingly portray himself as an opponent of taxation, and at the same time favor the kind of increases in social spending he does.

Meanwhile, Ray Shamie is busy wrapping himself in Reagan's mantle, hoping it won't prove to be a shroud. "My opponent calls me a radical," he said at the debate, "but if I am a radical what does that make Ronald Reagan?" Some of us would have no hesitation in answering that question. But alas, our view is not widely shared in Massachusetts, which did indeed go for McGovern in 1972, but which has since changed a good deal. The old ethnic-Yankee mix now has a new high-tech Yuppie leaven. These newcomers are no more reliably Democratic than are the state's Catholic voters, who have just been told by their bishop that abortion is the dominant issue in the election. (Kerry is pro-choice.)

On the other hand, Fritz Mondale's surge here since the first debate has made a race out of a rout. Last week, you could see Mondale buttons and posters sprouting all over downtown Boston, and Mondale's headquarters, on the two days I dropped by, was full of people coming off the street to volunteer and make donations. The Mondale-Ferraro revival is good news for John Kerry. With Ronald Reagan at the top of the Republican ticket, he will never face a tougher opponent than Ray Shamie who, echoing Ted Kennedy's 1962 slogan, says he can "do more for Massachusetts" with his friend in the White House. But in a state where registered Democrats still outnumber Republicans by 3 to 1, Kerry has the ghost of venerable loyalties going for him. The safe money here is betting that Massachusetts will have two Kennedyesque Senators after November 6. Why, I wonder, does this ostensibly fraternal pairing remind me of Gorky's remark about Tolstoy and God: that they were like two bears in the same den?

JACK BEATTY

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My one brief shining moment.

CALL TO GLORY

BY MORTON KONDRACKE

MONDAY, OCTOBER 15. I'm driving from Washington to Gettysburg College with Robert Novak, the troll under the bridge of American journalism. Each week, we fight with each other on "The McLaughlin Group" on TV, and we're heading up to Pennsylvania to do a little live ideological combat, he from the troglodyte-populist perspective, I from the neo-con neo-liberal. We are chatting about politics, of course, and the upcoming second debate between Mondale and Reagan on foreign policy. "Say," I say, "who do you guess they will pick for the panel?" Obviously it can't be either of us. Novak's too mean, and I work for an opinion magazine. A hundred journalists (actually eighty-three, I later learn) having been rejected for the first debate by one campaign or the other, we agree that the League of Women Voters this time will pick solid, safe, objective reporters, probably including Charles Corddry or Henry Trewhitt of *The Baltimore Sun* and Bernard Gwertzman of *The New York Times*, plus columnist Georgie Anne Geyer, whom I'd heard had been considered for the first panel but was out of the country. We forget the subject and drive on.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17. I fly to St. Louis to give a speech at Washington University. I say I support Reagan's covert war in Nicaragua. A young woman student demands to know, "What right does the United States have to alter the government of another country? Isn't that terrorism?" I answer lamely, feeling defensive on the ground of morality and international law. I leave hoping that somebody puts her question to the President on Sunday, and that he handles it better than I did.

Back home in Washington after dark, one of my daughters says that somebody named Carol Parr has called about three times. I don't know any Carol Parr. The phone rings.

"This is Carol Parr," says the voice on the other end. "I'm executive director of the League of Women Voters . . ." I think, "Oh, God." ". . . and I wonder if you would like to be a member of our debate panel on Sunday." "I accept," my mouth says. She says I'm to be in Kansas City for a meeting at 7 P.M. on Saturday at the Muehlbach Hotel and she wants to know how many tickets I want for audience seats at the debate. She tells me the other panelists are Georgie Anne Geyer, Henry Trewhitt, and Marvin Kalb of NBC. She asks me not to tell anyone about this until a press release is issued Thursday. The phone rings again. It's Sandy Frucher, my dear friend and New York campaign manager. Immediately I tell him what's happened. I bound upstairs to tell my wife, Millicent, and the kids. "You think I'm famous on account of McLaughlin," I tell the girls, "but this is 100 million people." "Aw, Dad," Andréa says, "you're so conceited!"

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18. I wake up at 4:30, debate questions buzzing in my head. I scribble some down before I forget them: "Reagan—vision of Soviet (superior? or ash heap of history?)"; "R or Mon—Philippines—dictators who get in trble w/ own people—what do?"; "Reagan—yr arms control record—who can believe you?"; "Mon—use force ever?"; "R—what rite topple Nic?"; "Reagan—Central Am— what proof Nic causing El Sal revo?"; "Reagan—Lebanon, terrorism—bluffing?"; "Star Wars." I drink my first cup of coffee fairly confident that I can raise some good issues, but I resolve to call all my friends for advice on question-framing and to collect their favorite zingers.

I walk the dog and peek at a *Wall Street Journal* on a neighbor's porch to check out my monthly column, written Tuesday. This June in the *Journal*, I lost a lot of friends and got semi-officially excommunicated from the liberal church by writing that I *might* vote for Reagan. In this morning's column, an attack on image-makers, I'm pretty neutral between the candidates. A lucky thing. If I'd made up my mind whom to vote for, I'd probably have written about it, and the League would be calling this morning to say, "We're awfully sorry, but. . ."

At THE NEW REPUBLIC, this whole thing is being taken with delight and team spirit. I feign modesty, but my colleague Charles Krauthammer, with his customary acuity, tells me and everyone else exactly how I really feel. "You want to end up a hero, covered with glory, and leave everybody dazzled," he says. I say, "Aw shucks." The TNR editorial staff spends half of an uproarious weekly meeting dreaming up questions for me to ask on Sunday. I resolve not to ask Reagan a factual question (e.g., "Please name the last three presidents of the Soviet Union") for fear of horribly embarrassing him—or, worse, me.

Thursday night, I fly to Connecticut for another college debate with Novak. I ask students at dinner for question ideas, and one of them brings up the Philippines. I imprudently say that's one I'm really thinking of, and immediately pray that no little Republican spy in the group will rush to a phone and earn himself a job by calling Reagan-Bush headquarters in Washington.

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How The White House Was Won

Ronald Reagan, the President from the movies, is more than the sum of the parts he has played. He is an actor in a larger sense, drawing his material from our lives and longings. To understand the sources of his appeal we must look beyond facts and figures to the cultural currents of our collective life.

Reagan embodies the paradoxes and triumphs of the most familiar and admired American hero, the maverick. Maverick heroes combine unwavering patriotism with a wariness of institutions. They stand apart from and are often critics of institutions, but they are also the apotheoses of these institutions. Reagan's similarity to the maverick hero helps explain why criticisms don't stick and why the President is not held accountable for the mistakes of his Administration.

The maverick heroes of American film are, like Reagan, at once insiders and outsiders. Reagan's recent speech at the United Nations, for example, could have come out of *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. Reagan, like James Stewart's Jefferson Smith, comes across as an openhearted, plain-speaking citizen: "You know, as I stand here and look out from this podium . . . I see the seat of the representative of the Soviet Union . . . not far . . . is . . . the representative of the United States . . . it's clear there's not a great distance between us." Though Reagan holds public office, he speaks in the earnest voice of the political outsider. Like the maverick hero, Reagan is of, but not part of, the government he heads.

This insider-outsider theme is woven into countless films of John Wayne, perhaps the most popular American maverick hero. In *The Alamo*, for example, Wayne plays Davy Crockett—rugged individualist, savvy frontiersman, leader of his own spirited band of backwoodsmen. Although he is a colonel and a Congressman, Crockett doesn't go by his titles. He disdains the regimented life of a soldier and authority in general. But at the critical moment, Crockett emerges as the true soldier and leader, inspiring the men to fight the hopeless battle at the Alamo for the sake of the republic. John Wayne's maverick heroes continue to fight their way through American history bound for glory in World War II and Vietnam, bucking bureaucracy all the way.

Popular films of the 1970s expressed other cultural currents that Reagan would tap, among them a disenchantment with political solutions. In a world where institutions were discredited and defied reform, Clint Eastwood's "Dirty Harry" succeeded John Wayne's confident cowboy. In Eastwood's films there is an even sharper tension in the hero's identity as insider and outsider. Dirty Harry is a police detective fighting for law and order, but he also has to fight his own boss, the bungling police department, the downtown bureaucrats, and the lawyers who care more about the rights of criminals than their victims. He gets the criminals in the end by breaking with the bureaucrats and drawing on his own resources. The parable of these films is Reagan's parable. The maverick hero stands both with and apart from the institutions he serves.

Reagan's ability to move within the story he tells makes for compelling rhetoric and a celebratory politics. His words resonate with the feelings and imaginative strivings of the American people. In his campaign speeches he affirms, "We will lift America up." The backdrop is a history of trauma and uncertainty—Vietnam, Watergate, Iran. By the end of the 1970s the American public was left reeling, groping for meaning. The mood of that time was captured in the popular and disturbing film *The Deer Hunter*. Shaken by Vietnam, the characters—young, patriotic working people from a Pennsylvania steel town—try to find their bearings. At the film's end, slowly, tentatively, they begin to sing, "God Bless America."

It is as if Reagan heard the faint strains of the melody and used his voice to make it a swelling song. His speeches draw the public into a ceremony of affirmation. The theme is economic and spiritual revival. "We're going to make this great nation even greater. America will be a rocket of hope shooting to the stars." The audience becomes his chorus, chanting, on cue, "U.S.A.!"

Not long ago, it was the liberals who spoke the language of celebratory politics. Whatever their flaws as programs, the New Frontier and the Great Society evoked an affirmative moral vision. Ministers were in the forefront of the civil rights and antiwar movements; and, unlike that of the Christian right today, their message was ecumenical, not sectarian. Today, most Democrats (Mario Cuomo being a notable exception) stay away from questions of morality and politics. While Reagan instinctively grasps the longing for meaning that underlies the latest revival of religion, many liberals respond like lawyers, reflexively invoking the division between church and state and between private and public morality. However important, these distinctions should be the beginning of political argument, not the end. This narrowing of focus leaves unanswered people's yearnings for ways to unify their lives and to reinvigorate public life with moral meaning.

Now it is Reagan and the Republicans whose rhetoric resonates with moral and religious sentiments. Though neither Catholic nor fundamentalist, Reagan makes the causes of school prayer and anti-abortion his own. Here again, Reagan benefits from the ambiguity of his status as insider and outsider. Without being bound to a particular church or doctrine, he succeeds in identifying with religious longings and values. One consequence is that his nonfundamentalist supporters can comfortably dismiss the religious side of his appeal as unthreatening campaign rhetoric; for them it is enough that he is the President of the economic recovery. For believers, meanwhile, Reagan is the defender of the faith.

Kiku Adatto

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19. I get up at 5 A.M. and fly back to Washington to tape "The McLaughlin Group." On the show, John McLaughlin demands to know who will win the big debate on Sunday. Novak and Jack Germond say it'll be a draw, leaving Reagan ahead. John McLaughlin and Pat Buchanan, incorrigible Reaganites, predict Reagan. I stay neutral.

The wires have announced the panel, and in the afternoon I get all kinds of unsolicited advice on the phone and in hand-delivered envelopes from corporate lobbyists (mostly urging questions supporting protectionist trade legislation). The American Indian Movement wants me to ask about broken treaties. The Campaign for a Qualified Woman Write-In Candidate wants me to ask a question that I can't understand. One friend wants me to ask: "If the purpose of the Grenada invasion was to rescue our medical students, why did it take U.S. forces ten hours to reach them?" Good question, just too narrow.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20. By 9 A.M. I'm at the office, bags packed. More phone calls, more questions. But I tell only five people what I'm really thinking about asking: my wife; my boss, Marty Peretz; Joseph Fromm of *U.S. News and World Report*; Charles Krauthammer; and one other friend I won't name because the candidate he's close to might get him fired for not squealing, as I know he did not. They not only strop the edge of my questions, but give plausible anticipated responses from the candidates, so I can junk questions that are too easy. By 2:30, when I have to leave to catch my plane, I have written out four questions on arms control, including follow-ups, four on Central America, two on Lebanon, and two on U.S.-Soviet relations. I love some of them; I know I won't get to ask them all. Indeed, I start worrying that somehow the other questioners will use up my subject areas and I'll be left with nothing to ask. This is the first hint of the jitters.

The TWA gate area at Washington National Airport is crowded with reporters, my lifetime fraternity brothers and sisters, heading for Kansas City a day early. They're all supportive, and maybe a little envious. I would be. GiGi Geyer comes sweeping in, and we give each other a hug. "The kids from Chicago have made the big time," I whisper. She was *Daily News* when I was *Sun-Times*. She went to Saigon and I went to Springfield; now here we are, twenty-one years later, heading for fame and glory.

In Kansas City, we gather in Suite 1109 at the Muehlbach and are greeted by Dorothy Ridings, president of the League of Women Voters, who informs us that the League has already decided the order of questioners: Geyer, Kalb, Kondracke, Trewhitt. This happens to be alphabetical, but we're told the order was decided on some other basis; I still don't know what it was. I think about protesting, but save it for another issue that quickly arises and is much more important: no children are permitted to attend a champagne reception with the President right after the debate. I am about to meekly accept this when debate moderator Edwin Newman pipes in to ask if his married daughter, no child, can come. Mrs. Ridings says yes, so I summon the courage to ask about my teenagers, and get them in, averting a family disaster that would be far worse than any blunder I could commit during the debate.

With Kalb, still in Washington, on a speakerphone, we parcel out questions. We'll each get eight—one question and one follow-up to each candidate in each of two rounds. Geyer wants Central America. "Please lay off 'use of force,' " I plead. I've been hoarding this great Mondale quote from his November of '83 speech to the Coalition for a Democratic Majority indicating to me that the Russians would be in Minnesota before he'd pick up a popgun against them. GiGi agrees. Kalb says his first question will be about the candidates' visions of the Soviet Union. "Shit," I think, but read him mine on the subject, much of which he will end up using. Then I read everybody my "use of force" question for Mondale, and my Philippines question for Reagan. Quickly approved. Then Trewhitt reads his tentative question about Reagan's age, linking the forbidden subject to the need for a President to have physical and mental stamina during a grinding international crisis. We all cheer, telling Hank he will never get his phone calls to the White House answered again. He says, "I have to make some sacrifices for my country."

We move on to the second round. GiGi is insistent on asking about immigration as a foreign policy issue. Kalb has questions about arms control and the freeze. I have a conflict. I want to ask Mondale about his give-away-everything-upfront negotiating style, but I also know that we need to have a question here someplace about Lebanon. The tentative resolution is that somehow I have to link the two subjects. The rules of the debate are that we must ask the "same" question of each candidate, but we decide we will interpret this, well, broadly. We retire till the next morning for a practice session at the debate auditorium.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21. I get up at 5:30, worried about how and when to ask the Lebanon question. I figure I've got to ask it early or Mondale will bring it up and preempt me, forcing me to wing it in the second round. That might lead to incoherent disaster, whereupon all the girls who refused to go out with me in high school will stop eating their hearts out and conclude that they did the right thing after all. I rework Lebanon yet again. More phone calls from friendly question-suggesters, including the Qualified Woman Write-In Campaign again. Somehow, it's already 9 and I have to go to this rehearsal.

The Kansas City Municipal Auditorium is a marvelous art deco W.P.A. project. As I enter with the panel, I realize I'm damp in the armpits. I'm not scared, but my body is. The drill for the next hour or two is that Mrs. Ridings practices her introduction, Newman practices his, and then we do a run-though debate. GiGi begins by asking a real Central America question; Newman quickly stops her. There are spies about. We practice on stand-in candidates using nonsense questions about the quality of beef in Kansas City, White House tennis court policy, and the price of real estate in California.

That over, I return to the hotel. Milly and the kids have

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arrived in town, but have disappeared. I spend half the afternoon rewriting these bloody questions, then Trewhitt and I go for a forty-minute run during which we talk about—what else?—questions. I resolve to prepare more backups—on the Middle East, international economics and alternate questions on the Philippines for Mondale and Reagan. The Lebanon question for Reagan and the use-of-force question for Mondale are now as mean as I can make them, and my tentative follow-up for Mondale is especially evil: "During the Democratic primaries, you opposed the invasion of Grenada as a violation of international law and said you'd pull almost all of our troops out of Honduras. Now, you say you might quarantine Nicaragua and you'd have invaded Grenada just as President Reagan did. Are you toughening your stance for election purposes? Which is the real you?" At 3:45 P.M., just before it's time for our final preliminary meeting, I get a call from Rick Hertzberg, suggesting that we ask about Reagan's weird references to Armageddon, the subject of a piece in the morning's *New York Times*.

We meet again in 1109 and read each other our questions. Kalb accepts Armageddon; his wife Madelaine has suggested the same question. Again, we agree that the best of all our shots is Hank Trewhitt's on Reagan's age. We head for the auditorium, escorted the two blocks by a policeman. We enter and go through the debate site to a holding room. Damp armpits again. I realize I have had nothing to eat all day. I've got a headache. There's food, but if I eat it, will I get indigestion? I eat a bit, take two aspirins. We all sit around, reading our questions to ourselves. At last, time.

Onstage, under the glaring lights, we wait for the candidates. I wave to my wife. My stomach is in an uproar. In come Reagan and Mondale. They shake hands. It begins.

I miss Reagan's first slip until Kalb reaches over and scratches "C.I.A. in Nic?" on my notepad and GiGi's. She follows up immediately. Kalb gets through his questions and it's me. My stomach stops bubbling and I get totally calm. Asking Mondale whether he'd ever use force, I notice Reagan give me a look that I think says, "You got him." Mondale slips away from the question. On the spur of the moment, I ask the Nicaragua quarantine question instead of the general-election tough-guy question. A mistake. Then, I let Reagan have it on Lebanon and terrorism—"not once but three times, and 300 Americans not hostages, but dead." Back in the pressroom and out in the country, I think I can hear people whisper, "whoosh." Reagan answers, ducking responsibility and twice calling me "Morton." Is this patronizing or just friendly? Maybe, I think later, he's not sure how to pronounce Kondracke.

The action moves on to Trewhitt, with results that are now history. He fires a fastball with lots of action on it, but Reagan is waiting and hits it out of the park with a joke. Back to GiGi, who is so eager, I think, to have immigration seen as a vital foreign policy issue that she delivers a speech. During Mondale's answer, I realize the panel should have urged her to combine immigration with international economics somehow, but we didn't think of it. On to Kalb and arms control. Reagan is incoherent on "Star Wars." People in the audience are laughing at the idea that we could develop space defenses, show them to the Russians, and have them thank us for giving them protection. I think Mondale, though, is disingenuous in making this a technology-transfer issue and posing as a hawk. And when Kalb asks Mondale about verification of the nuclear freeze, Mondale simply evades the obvious conclusion that the freeze is an empty promise. Feeling very secure, I decide to switch my questions to Mondale around and follow up on Kalb's question. I scribble down what can't be verified by satellite—research, testing and production of almost every missile and anti-missile system—and decide to ad lib a question. I get it out. Mondale evades again. Then, the Philippine question to Reagan—planned as a blind-side blow that he probably wouldn't have been coached on. He answers badly, making it seem the only alternatives are Marcos and communism.

Finally, closing statements. Mondale sounds firm, again hitting his theme of the night—that he's strong and wise, ready to command. I think, do I believe this? I have to vote soon, and I still don't know who I'm for. Mondale finishes, and I think like a political reporter: if Reagan gets through the next four minutes, he's practically got the election won. He starts out well, talking about whether we want to go back to the past and weakness or stay strong. And then suddenly, Reagan pauses . . . pauses again . . . and gets a vacant look in his eye. He can't remember where he's going. Thank God, at least he's talking again, but what's this about? A trip down a Pacific Coast highway on the way to a time capsule and people a hundred years from now who know all about us, though we know nothing about them (unless we have a nuclear war, in which case there will be no them). On and on it goes, and I have the sick feeling that he's never going to get back to earth and we are about to see something terrible occur—in my case, just forty feet away. Mercifully, Reagan recovers well enough to make a point about our responsibility to future generations. He's back on the ground, in control, and talking about America's wonderful young people when Newman cuts him off for using up all his time.

It's over. Candidate families are bounding on stage, and then over to us, the panel. President and Mrs. Reagan both tell me they watch "McLaughlin" every Saturday night. Joan Mondale, too, says she watches, but she puts it forlornly: "Many is the Saturday night that I've watched your show alone." I think, she'll be glad when this is over. Either the President or Mondale says, "Good, tough questions." I know it's not flattery. We exit the stage and head for the reception. I get Alexandra and Andréa first in line to meet the President and his family. (Next day, I do it again as the Mondales are leaving the hotel. Three stars for Dad.)

With family, I leave that reception for another, where we meet John and Lucy Masterman, old friends from Washington now in Kansas City. For the first time, I think about who won. With an unerring instinct for the conventional wisdom, I think: on debating points, Mondale; on politics, Reagan. But something more than that is disturb-

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ing: Trewhitt's question may have been knocked out of the park, but it was still the best of the night, and it's still not answered. Reagan's closing statement indicates to me that he has the stamina to stay sharp for about seventy minutes of sustained mental concentration. A Cuban Missile Crisis may require a President, as Trewhitt said, to go for days on end with very little sleep. If Reagan wins, we'd better pray not just for his health but for a quiet, crisis-free world.

Back at the Muehlbach, the lobby is filled with reporters and Mondale aides (Reagan is at a different hotel). I get bathed in more praise than ever before in my life. I love it. I call Charles Krauthammer and Mark and Judy Siegel back in Washington. Praise confirmed. I love it even more. I expect that there will be floods of apologies soon from old nongirlfriends. For a while, I guess, I'll get recognized in every airport in America the way I do on the street in Washington, thanks to "McLaughlin." I long ago decided that being Tom Brokaw or Dan Rather, never being anonymous *anywhere*, is not for me. But a little fame, that's nice.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 22. Professionally, I turn back into a scullery maid at 7 A.M., attending the press briefing at which Mondale's staff declares victory in the debate. I also talk to people about how this debate panel was put together. The league compiled a list of twelve journalists and submitted them to the campaigns for what amounts to nomination. I was originally picked by the Reagan campaign, I've learned from both sides, and then accepted by Mondale. Hedrick Smith of *The New York Times* was so offended by the idea of vetting by candidates that he turned down an offer to be on the panel. If that made room for me, I'm grateful to his conscience. But what bothers me about TV debates is that they isolate the candidates from real challenge. There is only one follow-up on each subject (I tried to shoehorn a second one into my Philippine question, but got cut off), and candidates are free to practically ignore the questions altogether. It would be better for the candidates to be alone on the stage with one smart moderator to pose topics and act as traffic cop and lie detector. I nominate Ted Koppel, the best question-asker in America.

I am informed back in Washington that Ron Powers, media critic of CBS, judged me "star panelist" of the debate. He said that I am "well known as a neoconservative pundit, but . . . did not spare the President." Thanks, Ron, but since my excommunication I've been calling myself a moderate.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23. After a trip to New York for a dinner, I take the 7 A.M. shuttle back to Washington to write this story. As I walk through the nearly full plane toward a rear seat, not a single head turns in my direction. Not one set of eyes reveals a shock of recognition. At Washington National, the same lack of reaction. And, on the subway heading for the office, the same. No one out of my past has called. I conclude that fame and glory have a half-life of about eighteen hours. It's okay. I loved every minute of it.

The bitter fate of 'better facts.'

THE EVE OF DESTRUCTION

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

Kansas City, Mo.

THE LAST TIME Kansas City appeared on national television, it was seen on the horizon under a mushroom cloud. Now another kind of Armageddon was at hand. In the final conflict between Ronald Reagan and Walter Mondale each would portentously depict the other's policies as the scenario for *The Day After*. For both candidates the ideal image is to have a steady finger on the button, without pushing it. To achieve this Presidential pose, Mondale and Reagan had to escape from the images that had been imposed upon them.

Since the earliest days of the campaign Mondale had been bedeviled by the notion that he is weak. His very first television ads, in Iowa, claimed, "This President will deal from *strength*." Yet no matter how many times Mondale uttered "strength" a cloud of "weakness" shadowed him. His debate strategy was to portray himself as strong on his own terms. To Mondale, knowledge is strength. A President must command the facts to command the national security state. When exposed as "out of touch" Reagan would be revealed as a figurehead President, an image without content, the Wizard of Oz. Then his magic would go. By demonstrating superior knowledge, Mondale would prove his Presidential leadership. Reagan would be maneuvered into a hypothetical doomsday scenario in which his natural enthusiasm would lead him to press the button. The hypothetical would then become actual, for he would incinerate his campaign. Only on this ultimate issue, Mondale strategists reasoned, could Reagan be defeated.

Just as his opponent prepared to overcome the charge of "weakness," the 73-year-old President prepared to dismiss the charge of incipient senility. Was the meandering speech of the Louisville Reagan due to the infirmities of old age? Was Reagan the Methuselah that failed? The "age issue" crowded out the thought that his behavior in the first debate wasn't attributable to age but to his enduring state of mind. Senator Paul Laxalt, Republican National Committee Chairman, asserted that the President had been "brutalized" by his preparation process. He had been forced to memorize reams of facts; he suffered from an aides syndrome. Unexpected difficulties loomed. If Reagan couldn't come back, how valid was his campaign slogan—America is coming back? In Kansas City, the real Reagan would have to reappear, vital as ever, projecting his big themes. The facts wouldn't obstruct our vision of his vision; he would leap beyond petty detail. And he wouldn't drool. His opponent was not Mondale, but his own Louisville image.

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To an uncommon degree, the candidates' strategies were fulfilled; both mostly succeeded in what they set out to do. Mondale the Strong defeated Mondale the Weak, and Reagan the Gipper beat Reagan the Geezer. Mondale presented himself as an impeccable cold warrior. He didn't trust the Soviets, the Cubans, or the Nicaraguans. "Tough" and "strong" were favored words. Compared with this hawkish Mondale, Reagan was a softie. Why didn't he retaliate against terrorists in Lebanon? The weakling provoked the bully to advise caution: "We're not going to simply kill some people to say, 'Oh look, we got even.' " The candidates passed each other going in opposite directions on the ideological spectrum.

Meanwhile, Mondale tried to arouse fear of Reagan as Mr. Magoo loose in the war room. Reagan obliged by tripping on Mondale's facts. He also fell over a few fictions he placed in his own path. Yes, we have a C.I.A. station chief in Nicaragua. Oops! "I misspoke." And "that agency head there" excised the elicit parts of a C.I.A. assassination manual. Wrong. And "I never" said that "nuclear missiles can be fired and then called back." Wrong again. Then Reagan announced, Magoo-like, that his Administration did not reject the famous "walk in the woods" arms control agreement. Gong. On issue after issue Mondale revealed Reagan's position to be without empirical foundation. Time and again Mondale reiterated his fact-theme: "a President is called the commander in chief, and he's called that because he's supposed to be in charge of the facts." Mondale was the field marshal of facts.

But by getting almost everything wrong, Reagan was getting an important thing right. His facts were askew but his themes were in order. According to Reagan, this is a Manichean world, riven into spheres of Good and Evil. This sharply drawn hostility has positive potential because it promises triumph of Good. A gray vision, on the other hand, leads to weak accommodations, piecemeal surrender. All events are sifted through his ideology. The Shah of Iran, he explained, was a Persian New Dealer—"But we turned it over to a maniacal fanatic." What's more, there is no alternative in the Philippines to either authoritarian or totalitarian dictatorship.

A MANICHEAN must believe that a world split in two can be made whole again. Will there be a cataclysmic destructive act, followed by a rebirth—a battle of Armageddon? Are we headed for "some kind of nuclear Armageddon"? asked Marvin Kalb of NBC News. Reagan, who has in fact entertained notions of a Biblical Armageddon, claimed they were "philosophical discussions." Besides, "no one knows" when those prophecies will come true. He does not, he said, "plan according to Armageddon." He gave credence to the doomsday theology, but denied it was official doctrine. The reason is that Reagan has his own secular doctrine, at odds with both nuclear and religious theology.

Reagan is an original thinker of great imagination. He has a personal chiliastic vision of the end of days through the control of Heaven. We can end the long twilight struggle and usher in the kingdom of endless peace. Reagan ridiculed Mutual Assured Destruction—MAD—the reality underlying the theory of deterrence in American nuclear policy. He seemed to believe MAD is a Mondale "fact," a Democratic contrivance, rather than a fact of life. "What if we come up with a weapon that renders those missiles obsolete?" he wondered. If the atomic bomb is the technological First Coming that set up the logic of Armageddon, then a "Star Wars" defense is a technological Second Coming. It is a literal *deus ex machina* that places the forces of Good permanently in the ascendancy and inaugurates the era of eternal tranquility. We will share our most advanced weapons technology with the Soviets; the lion will lie down with the lamb. "Why not?" asked Reagan. To convince the Soviets, we will "give them a demonstration." (Forget, for a moment, among other things, that this would require firing tens, if not hundreds, of nuclear weapons, and that it would violate three arms control treaties.) Through this gambit, Armageddon will be avoided, and yet we will reach the goals that Armageddon makes possible in the theological vision. Thus we will attain what Reagan calls "my ultimate dream." Here we reach the ultimate utopian moment in the history of Reaganism, its cosmic vision. Reagan's utopia goes beyond Jonathan Schell's—it approaches Jonathan Livingston Seagull's.

In spite of these unsettling intimations, Reagan apparently laid the "age issue" to rest with a quip: "I am not going to exploit for political purposes my opponent's youth and inexperience." More important, his parry punctured the fear Mondale was attempting to stoke. How could this reassuring and smiling fellow be a menace? It was hard to imagine him pushing the button.

Mondale, therefore, came to his closing statement having won on the merits of each case but having lost the dramatic moment. He had reached the end of the debate and Reagan still hadn't blown up the world. On the contrary, Reagan had saved the world through messianic technology. Mondale stood at ground zero. Reagan wouldn't press the button? Well, somebody's got to do it: "I remember," Mondale said, "the night before I became Vice President, I was given the briefing and told that at any time, night or day, I might be called upon to make the most fateful decision on Earth, whether to fire these atomic weapons that could destroy the human species . . . Pick a President that you know will know if that tragic moment ever comes what he must know, because there will be no time for staffing, committees, or advisers. A President must know right then. " Reagan may not know what to do. Mondale will. Condition red. The codes, please.

In the first debate, Reagan's feeble closing statement did much to foster the "age issue." Yet that one was a model of clarity compared to this one. He began by asking, "Do you want to see America returned to the policies of weakness of the last four years?" What? We were entering unrehearsed territory. As Reagan talked, one could almost hear a disembodied narration, the rich, staccato voice of Rod Serling . . . "You're driving a car down a highway in California. The ocean shimmers on your left. Suddenly, a

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man demands that you write a letter to people living one hundred years in the future. They know everything about you. You know nothing about them. You wonder if the Bomb was dropped. You're about to enter a land not only of sight and sound, but of mind. A wonderous land of imagination. There's a signpost up ahead. You are entering . . . the Twilight Zo—"

"Mr. President, I'm obliged to cut you off there." It's a different voice—that of Edwin Newman. And suddenly, you're in a large hall in Kansas City. You're standing next to Walter Mondale. You blink. You're running for President.

Down in the cavernous basement of the hall, hundreds of reporters were watching the debate on two thirty-foot screens. The instant the debate ended the Interpretation Game began. The candidates' "spin patrols" dashed down a flight of stairs like whirling dervishes. Their mission was to influence the "spin" on the story. The campaign had come down to this. How hard were Gary Hart and Jesse Jackson stumping for Mondale? Would George Bush achieve a satisfactory testosterone level? None of it mattered. The campaign was the debate. There was nothing else.

All of Mondale's senior staff jumped into gathering crowds of reporters. "Humphrey was about the same percentage points behind," said Bob Beckel, campaign manager, sweating profusely. "Mondale walked away with it!" "A thousand dollars we win Ohio!" shouted Lee Atwater, Reagan's deputy manager. "A thousand dollars we win California! Right now! A thousand dollars!" "Better facts," said Jim Johnson, Mondale's chairman. McGeorge Bundy, enlisted as a Mondale spinner, stood on the side of the room and observed: "It's really astonishing. Reagan hasn't kept track of his own government's program. It's Never Never Land. He's out to lunch on the facts." The Reagan spinners withdrew from the basement battlefield first. They had made their point. "Mondale," said Bob Teeter, the Republican pollster, "is 15 points behind."

During the debate Mondale quoted the sage, Groucho Marx: "Who do you believe—me or your own eyes?" Mondale believes that the voters, when given the facts, will disbelieve Reagan. He has faith that reality, as he understands it, cannot be denied. But reality is not one-dimensional; there is also the reality of image. In the debate Mondale may have provided more rational underpinning for his ideas. Reagan, however, is an idea himself. He is the embodiment of projected desires. Do we want "better facts" to disabuse us of these dreams? Or do we want to comfort ourselves with continuing belief? Reagan tells us that if we do, the spell will not be broken.

Knowledge is confusion. Peace is "Star Wars." Ignorance is strength.

Why money can't buy Jay Rockefeller love.

ROCKY ROAD

BY JOHN B. JUDIS

Charleston, W. Va.

AS FAR BACK AS 1964, when the 27-year-old Jay Rockefeller left his State Department desk job to become a poverty worker in West Virginia, his friends predicted that he would go far. Charles Peters, who worked with Rockefeller in the Peace Corps and is now the editor of the *Washington Monthly*, recalls, "When he went down there, I thought the guy was going to be governor of West Virginia and then President of the United States." These glimmering visions of greatness have accompanied Rockefeller as he has been elected a delegate to the West Virginia House, secretary of state, and then governor. On election day Rockefeller is expected to successfully take the next step up and win the Senate seat left open by the retirement of incumbent Jennings Randolph. Speculation is already rife about a White House bid. When *People* magazine ran a profile of Rockefeller in 1983, the subheadline read, "The early line on the 1988 Presidential race figures West Virginia's governor as one heir apparent."

The media and the political establishment's fascination with Rockefeller has less to do with his record in office than with his last name. In a country where politics are dominated by wealth, only those wealthy beyond imagination are deemed free from venal self-interest and therefore capable of representing the whole society. With the Kennedys having lost their claim to the unofficial aristocracy, Rockefeller is poised to take their place

Rockefeller not only has the money—*Forbes* lists him among the four hundred wealthiest persons in America—but he also has the bearing and family. Over six feet six, with ruddy regular features and dark-rimmed glasses, he married Sharon Percy, the blond, elegant, and accom-

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PURSUING PERCY

Politics has been good to Charles H. Percy. When he arrived in Washington eighteen years ago to represent Illinois in the Senate, his moderate Republicanism was in vogue. In pinstriped suit or yellow Polo shirt, the Bell and Howell executive was the very picture of enlightened, self-satisfied prosperity. He espoused fashionable reforms to frustrate the old Chicago Democratic machine, which obligingly served up a succession of easy marks to run against him. In 1979 seniority elevated him to the chairmanship of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, from which exalted post he has been able to hobnob with world leaders much as he had done with his corporate pals, Chicago's social set, and the upper crust of North Shore suburbia, where he resides.

This year Chuck Percy's charm faces its toughest test. As he runs for a fourth term, he faces a different kind of Democratic opponent. Representative Paul Simon, 54, is a principled reformer who has long labored for education and public employment programs rooted in the New Deal. Simon comes from rural southern Illinois, while the party's last two nominees came out of metropolitan Chicago. Simon is to Percy's left, while his predecessors chewed at the incumbent from the right. And Simon is a stranger to his multimillionaire opponent's social milieu. With his trademark bow tie, long-sleeved dress shirt, glasses, bumpkin haircut, and preppy opponent, Simon could easily be cast as one of life's earnest underdogs in *Revenge of the Nerds*.

At 64 Percy swims half a mile on odd days, skips rope 800 times on even ones, and even jogs a bit on Chicago's Gold Coast. The unathletic Simon is an occasional swimmer, and his only concession to image has been the apparent drift of his hair toward a blow-dry look. Percy has fit into the role of privilege since his days at the University of Chicago, when he ran the Inter-Fraternity Council and the water polo team. Simon dropped out of Dana College in Blair, Nebraska, but later earned seventeen honorary degrees and wrote nine books. Percy likes to glad-hand with famous actors, including Charlton Heston; Simon confessed at a recent fund-raising dinner that he had never heard of the actress Margot Kidder, who had come to read passages from Bertolt Brecht to Chicago precinct captains. For Simon, after laboring fourteen years in the Illinois legislature, barely losing a gubernatorial primary in 1972, and serving twelve years in Congress, ousting Percy from the Senate would be a sweet triumph indeed.

Many swing organizations and influential individuals that helped Percy in his last election have deserted him for Simon this year. In 1978 Jesse Jackson cut radio testimonials for Percy. Now Jackson is on the fence, and Chicago Mayor Harold Washington has made radio ads for Simon that Percy complains are "racist" mainly because they appeal to black voters. The liberal-leaning Independent Voters of Illinois-Independent Precinct Organization, after supporting Percy twice, has switched to Simon. The Illinois A.F.L.-C.I.O., which endorsed Percy last time, is for Simon this time. Jewish leaders, accustomed to a fight-and-make-up routine with Percy, are in no mood to make up this year. An analysis of campaign disclosures showed that Simon has been the country's top beneficiary of contributions from Israel-connected political action committees.

The Jewish shift has cost Percy dearly. After years in the Percy camp, Robert Asher, the first Chicago president of the American-Israel Public Affairs Commission, maneuvered to become Simon's chief fund-raiser. Asher, a Republican, still favors Reagan over Mondale, but most of his energy goes to Simon. Three major differences on the Middle East stand out. They are on legislation for arms sales to Arab countries, the location of the U.S. Embassy in Israel, and the amount of aid to Israel. Simon has opposed all weapons sales to Arab nations, while Percy has favored some. Simon supports moving the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and has argued for maximum aid to Israel. Percy follows the President's line on both matters. Percy didn't help himself any when he told a Chicago radio audience that "Jewish people are the most intelligent people I've ever known, but they are also extraordinarily emotional, and on that issue [the embassy location] they are wrong, wrong, wrong."

Blacks, liberal reform groups, and big labor—who made up the rest of Percy's old reliable margin of safety—have also shunned him because of his ideological shift. Four years ago Percy was encouraging the John Anderson campaign; but this year, facing the first primary challenge ever mounted against him, he has become a born-again Reaganite. Some of his rightward twitches—such as his enthusiasm for the school prayer amendment—were abrupt. The New Right has remained unimpressed. Richard Viguerie, publisher of the *Conservative Digest*, and other New Right leaders have endorsed the Libertarian Party candidate, Steven I. Givot, a wealthy trader in stock options from the Chicago suburbs. The New Right clique insists the Republicans don't need Percy to hold the Senate, where the margin is now 55 to 45. Percy thinks the rightists are just trying to clear the way for Jesse Helms to take over as Foreign Relations chairman.

The latest polls show Percy clinging to a narrow lead, but he's running scared and has shed his country-club courtliness. His campaign is airing a series of negative ads, the nastiest of which falsely accuses Simon of advocating tax increases even bigger than those proposed by Walter Mondale. At first Simon was hesitant to play this kind of political hardball. But after being pounded by the ad for a week, Simon, in the candidates' final debate, brought himself to charge that Percy had lied in his "sleazy" ad. Percy remained oblivious to Simon's uncharacteristic burst of emotion and continued to hang the label of tax raiser on Simon. If Simon wants to exact his revenge on the privileged preppy, he'll have to match him blow for blow in the final days of the campaign.

BASIL TALBOTT JR.

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plished daughter of Senator Charles Percy. By going to West Virginia, Rockefeller became like the hero in the fairy tale who must slay dragons or live in penury in order to claim the hand of the princess and the succession to the throne. By becoming governor and now probably Senator, Rockefeller, the self-made heir, has earned the right of succession—at least in the view of *People*.

But in West Virginia, Rockefeller's road to power has become unexpectedly rocky in the past four years. In 1980, running for reelection against former Governor Arch Moore, who had been indicted for extortion, Rockefeller spent $11.7 million—or $29.82 per vote—and only edged Moore by 65,000 votes out of more than 700,000 votes cast. This November he is facing Morgantown newspaper publisher John Raese, a man with no experience in public office and the political instincts of Johnny Rotten. (Angered recently by a local reporter's question, Raese hoisted him by the lapels and shouted in his face, "I buy and sell reporters like you every day.") But Rockefeller has already had to spend nearly $8 million to shake Raese, who trailed him by only 8 percent last July. By late September Rockefeller's lead had doubled, though he still trailed Raese among 18- to 24-year-old voters. Rockefeller has been caught by the peculiar dynamic created by the great-grandson of the richest man in America seeking political fortune in one of America's poorest states. In Rockefeller's first years in West Virginia, he was able to turn the incongruity to his own advantage, but in the last four years, it has begun to turn against him. Infatuation between the prince and the paupers has given way to resentment and hubris.

WEST VIRGINIA is as poverty-stricken as it is beautiful. Its harsh mountainous terrain limits transportation and industry and leaves it with no city of more than 70,000 people. Barely fifteen miles outside of Charleston, the state capital, you can go straight from the highway onto dirt roads which run through isolated mountain towns, where unemployed mining families live in mobile homes and where deserted cars and boarded up stores recall other days. The state's principal industries, coal and steel, have been among the most vulnerable to the whims of the world economy. In the midst of the national recovery, unemployment here is still almost 14 percent. Mike Burdiss, the state political director of the United Mine Workers, says, "There never has been a good time in West Virginia."

It was this poverty which attracted Jay Rockefeller. He had been raised in unstinting luxury at Pocantico, New York, educated at Exeter and Harvard, but he had been inculcated with family tradition. Jay's father and grandfather were philanthropists not industrialists, who dedicated themselves to overcoming the legacy of the original John D. Rockefeller: class hatred and industrial violence. Jay Rockefeller grew up believing that to be a Rockefeller meant to devote one's self to making life better for the less fortunate. "I was brought up in a tradition of service," he says.

After college Rockefeller went to work in Washington for the Peace Corps. He was attracted by the optimistic and idealistic side of the Kennedy Administration, expressed for him in the slogan, "We can do better." Robert Kennedy became his model. In 1964, bored by his Washington desk job, he decided to join the Attorney General's fledgling war against poverty. He had Kennedy, with whom he had become friends, appoint him to Action for Appalachian Youth, a Justice Department project in West Virginia. Rockefeller spent two years in the tiny town of Emmons, three-fourths of whose sixty families were on public assistance. Rockefeller won the townspeople over by not denying who he was—one of the first nights there he entertained them with a slide show of his family—and at the same time acting like a normal American. His appetite for beans became legendary. "If you're having beans, you'd better have plenty of them," one townsperson told the *Charleston Daily Mail* in 1965. Jim Richardson, who worked with him in Action for Appalachian Youth, remembers him as a "warm, neat guy who didn't flaunt his wealth at all."

IN 1966 he decided to run for the House of Delegates. Looking in his dark-rimmed glasses like Clark Kent and speaking deliberately, without any relish but with the self-assurance of his background, Rockefeller told Charleston's Kiwanis Club, "I am getting into politics because I now realize that the job of helping the poor to help themselves cannot be done in just one community. You have got somehow to affect government institutions." He finished first in a field of twelve while Republicans were sweeping state offices. In 1968 he was elected secretary of state by a landslide. There was some resentment of Rockefeller because of his name and wealth—many miners had heard of the 1914 Ludlow Massacre, in which twenty-six strikers at the Rockefellers' Colorado Fuel and Iron Company were gunned down. But this resentment was always balanced by deference and a certain gratitude that Rockefeller had chosen to live in the state.

Rockefeller sometimes acted as if he were unaware of the great gulf separating him from most of his constituents. In a 1976 campaign speech at a two-year community college, he told the students, "I know the kinds of pressures you all feel. I had to drop out of Harvard and go to Japan." For the most part though, he has acted very deliberately to temper the resentment and to increase the aura of magical power surrounding his name and presence.

Rockefeller is a somewhat aloof man (his closest campaign aide calls him "governor"), but he insists that voters call him "Jay." All of his campaigns have emphasized hand-shaking tours of West Virginia's smallest towns and frequent visits to senior citizen centers, where Rockefeller bends over to banter with the old folk like an affectionate son. At the same time, he never failed to tout the benefits that his last name would bring to West Virginians. In his 1972 campaign for governor, he declared, "If there is one thing I know I can do as governor better than anyone else, it is to produce jobs for West Virginia. This you can count

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on, or my name isn't Jay Rockefeller."

As he came to understand that even the trappings of great wealth could be used to political advantage, he dropped his customary reserve about his own fortune. He has now released his tax returns three times while challenging his opponents to follow suit. He publicly estimates his total wealth as $98 million. Last August he threw his 3,000-acre spread in Pocahontas County open to a fund-raiser. For $50 a head, West Virginians were able to gaze in rapture at the unobstructed view of West Virginia's mountains (Rockefeller had kept buying up land, his wife explained, because he "doesn't want a Dairy Queen out there") and to marvel at the upholstered bed in the Rockefellers' bathroom, where their two Burmese cats retire. Such displays of wealth seem to increase Rockefeller's hold over the average West Virginian's imagination.

WEST VIRGINIA has a reputation as a liberal state, but its economic liberalism has always been qualified by a deep social conservatism and an unquestioning support of America's military. It is a bastion of both New Deal economics and fundamentalist book banning. In 1972 Presidential candidate George McGovern got only 33 percent of the vote in West Virginia in spite of the 2-to-1 Democratic registration. And Jay Rockefeller was soundly defeated by incumbent Governor Arch Moore. It was the only election Rockefeller has ever lost, and it had a profound impact on his political views.

During the 1960s Rockefeller had been close to being a McGovern Democrat. He adamantly opposed the Vietnam War—when Humphrey asked Rockefeller to nominate him at the 1968 convention, he refused. He did not distance himself from his wife's public support for gun control. In West Virginia he opposed the corrupt electoral system based on patronage and open vote-buying, and he favored the abolition of strip mining. When he ran for governor against Moore in 1972, he ran as the anti-establishment candidate. But Moore, aided by the coal companies which gave miners paid leave to heckle Rockefeller, was able to use Rockefeller's opposition to strip mining and his affinity to McGovern to paint him as a wealthy carpetbagger. Moore awakened the resentment against Rockefeller's wealth that had lain dormant in previous elections.

After 1972 Rockefeller changed his political outlook to accord with the presumptions of West Virginians and what he took to be the changes in national politics. He abandoned his outright opposition to strip mining, claiming that new technology had vastly improved land reclamation; he repudiated gun control and limited his support of abortion rights. He supported school prayer, and he proclaimed that America, having passed "from profusion to restraint," would have to tighten its belt.

Rockefeller's liberal allies regarded his change of mind as opportunism. "He changed from a liberal person who was willing to take a stand on behalf of the people to a far more conservative politician who would go out and take a poll and be for whatever the poll said," state Senator Si Galperin charges. But Rockefeller's commitment to "good government" and to uplifting the poor—the hallmarks of his family's philanthropic legacy—remained intact in his new politics.

In his 1976 campaign for governor Rockefeller promised that he would provide new jobs through fostering the growth of coal mining and through diversifying West Virginia's industrial base. He claimed to have his sights on eighty-eight new industrial parks. He promised to clean up political corruption and to provide tax relief for the poor and the aged. His name and connections, he said, would enable him to keep these promises. He won by the largest margin ever in a West Virginia gubernatorial race. He had become the state's most popular politician and a looming presence in national politics. In 1976 *Newsweek* suggested that by 1984, after serving two terms in Charleston, Rockefeller would be "looking for a new home in Washington."

Measured against the performance of other recession-state governors, Rockefeller has not done badly. He has had some notable failures. Only six of the eighty-eight industrial parks were built. He rejected out of hand a state supreme court recommendation that the state's decrepit public school system be overhauled. He was unable to win funding for repairs to many secondary roads. But he was able to get the recalcitrant legislature to pass hospital cost containment and utility rate reform and to eliminate the sales tax on food. He played an important role in saving the Weirton Steel factory in Wheeling, now the world's largest employee-run plant, and he gave West Virginia its first scandal-free administration in decades.

But in spite of his respectable record, Rockefeller's popularity has steadily dropped over his two terms. Polls taken in 1982 before Jennings Randolph announced his retirement showed West Virginia Democrats backing the 80-year-old incumbent over Rockefeller for the Senate nomination. In the same poll 62 percent of West Virginians rated Rockefeller either fair or poor as a governor. This year, it is difficult to find anyone outside the state government and his campaign who will say a good word about Rockefeller. Even Democrats working for his election privately denigrate his record. Some believe that if Moore had run for Senator rather than for governor this year, he would have defeated Rockefeller handily.

THERE APPEAR to be two reasons for this decline. First, his performance has not been measured against what other governors have accomplished, but against the illusion that Rockefeller's own campaign advertising encouraged: that his name was magic. When Rockefeller performed no better than he would have had his name been "Randolph" or "Moore," voters became disillusioned. Second, as Rockefeller's popularity began to slip, he created a vicious circle by using his wealth to arrest the decline. If Rockefeller had not outspent Moore by 12 to 1 in 1980, he might well have lost the governorship. And if he had not been prepared to do so again in 1984—and he indicated as much—he might have faced an opponent far

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more formidable than Raese. While profligacy has saved Rockefeller from defeat, it has also rekindled resentment. One Democratic official in Elkins County says, "He has become unpopular. Mountain people don't like to think that they can be bought like New Yorkers." Prince Charming has been transformed into an ordinary politician. Don Marsh, the managing editor of the pro-Rockefeller *Charleston Gazette*, explains. "I once read that the enlightened patrician is the best hope for democracy, so I was very enthusiastic about Rockefeller. But in the end he's another West Virginia politician, fixing elections and buying votes."

ROCKEFELLER'S CAMPAIGN is being run this year, as it was in 1980, by two young New Yorkers, Phil Friedman and Henry Morris, formerly of Garth Associates and now of their own firm, Campaign Strategies. Having also run reelection campaigns for Randolph in 1978 and Senator Robert Byrd in 1982, Friedman and Morris have become the premier Democratic consultants in the state. They have crafted Rockefeller's 1984 campaign to counteract West Virginians' disillusionment. They have urged Rockefeller to spend a lot of time shaking hands and talking in small groups ("Ordinary people just want to be touched by him and treated well by him," Friedman explains). Rockefeller's ads stress his accomplishments in office (the Weirton rescue, reduced property taxes for the elderly), his commitment to the state ("Jay Rockefeller came here twenty years ago . . . Jay loves West Virginia"), and his clout in Washington. In 1980 Friedman and Morris used a cube with the faces of neighboring governors testifying to Rockefeller's clout in Washington. In 1984 they are using a cube with the faces of prominent Senators. Russell Long says "There's a little touch of magic that'll go with Jay Rockefeller," and Lloyd Bentsen confirms that "Jay Rockefeller will have money and power from the day he arrives."

Friedman and Morris see no problem with Rockefeller's campaign spending. In fact, they believe that Rockefeller's campaigns have revolutionized the state's politics for the better. The "Rockefellerization" of West Virginia politics, they call it. "Before Rockefeller you needed people like county leaders and organizations and opinion-makers to win elections. Now you run the election through the media," Friedman says. Whether most West Virginians benefit from Rockefellerization is not clear. In the place of corrupt county officials somewhat accountable to their visible constituents, state residents now have political action committees and wealthy candidates who provide business for anonymous consultants like Friedman and Morris. Is Jay Rockefeller more accountable than Arch Moore? "Arch was a crook," one Democrat in Charleston says paraphrasing the popular reaction, "but he was our crook."

Rockefeller refuses to discuss whether he harbors Presidential ambitions. He frequently refuses interviews with national publications for that reason. (He said that he only consented to the *People* story because the magazine agreed to print a picture of him rafting on a West Virginia river.) But few people who have known and worked with him doubt that he would like to be President. And no one with a passing knowledge of the Rockefeller family history doubts that he would like to gain the office his Uncle Nelson never reached.

At age 21 Rockefeller chose the role of the head of the family and the heir to his great-grandfather. At birth his father had christened him simply "John Rockefeller" so that he could decide later whether he wanted the burdens of the first born. When he reached the age of majority, Jay decided he wanted to become John D. Rockefeller IV. In doing so, he accepted not only the family's "tradition of service," but its record of national leadership, a record that cannot be fully served as the junior Senator from a small, poor state.

But if Rockefeller does want to be President, he will have to demonstrate that he has the capability to win a national campaign and to govern the nation. On this score, his two-decade record as a West Virginia politician is inconclusive at best. Politically he lacks the skills necessary for a national campaign. While he is very effective in small groups, he is wooden in front of large groups. He has a keen intelligence and a passion for understanding complex policy questions, but he lacks an arresting view of the whole.

LIKE OTHER DEMOCRATS who matured politically in the 1960s, Rockefeller is torn between the goal of prosperity and the goal of social justice that informed Robert Kennedy's 1968 Presidential campaign. Rockefeller calls Kennedy his "last hero." Speaking of the 1968 campaign, he says nostalgically, "It was kind of a great uplifting" but doubts that even he would accept it as realistic in 1984. In despair, Rockefeller (and other Democrats) has taken refuge in the complexities of acid rain or tax reform. Rockefeller is unwilling to acknowledge that Reagan's success, and that of the Republicans in general, is the result of a politics that promises prosperity, if not social justice, in a world economy that the United States no longer dominates. Rockefeller attributes Reagan's popularity simply to "the power of style," and he explains younger voters' support of Reagan—and Raese—as "part of the television generation phenomenon."

Of all contemporary Democrats, he is probably most like Jimmy Carter, a man with whom he got along famously. Like Carter, he is too focused on the forest of political detail. Like Carter, he would be best suited to be President in a period after a new political consensus had been reached—not in a period like the present, when a consensus is lacking and when Democrats are casting about for a new sense of purpose. In West Virginia, enthusiasm about Rockefeller's Presidential prospects has succumbed to the same virus as popular enthusiasm about other aspects of Rockefeller's endeavor. "His record does not induce me to join the grass-roots movement," Don Marsh says. "The farther you got away from Georgia the more impressive Carter seemed. I suppose the same may be true of Rockefeller and West Virginia." □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

The Scots Ha' a Word for It

Bill Forsyth is the Dr. Feelgood of film. He doesn't shoot us full of Movieland happy dust: he tells the truth, but it's about what he loves in people—surely as true as what he and we dislike in our species. This Scotsman makes his films about a Glasgow (and environs) where sanity consists in seeing how ridiculous even hopelessness is; once that's realized, considerable pleasure and manageable pain can be had out of daily life.

Comfort and Joy
(Universal)

Garbo Talks
(MGM/UA)

His first film, *That Sinking Feeling*, more below-budget than low-budget, was about a "crime" caper by some Glasgow teenagers. *Gregory's Girl*, about high school romance, was charming because Forsyth was charmed by his people and showed why. *Local Hero* moved well up the budget scale—Burt Lancaster as a Texas tycoon on the prowl for Scottish oil. It suffered a wee bit (God, it's catching!) from contrivance but had its enchantments just the same. The great merit of his latest, *Comfort and Joy*, is that it's another big-budget picture, by Forsyth standards, and it's just as casual as the first two.

He's been knocked for this by some commentators. "Where's the beefy plot?" they want to know. For me, the pleasure in *Comfort and Joy* is precisely its nonchalance about plot: some things happen to the hero, and he proceeds through them, that's all. The two major events are only abstractly connected. But the man himself is seen so affectionately that all I wanted was to spend more time with him. Ultimately, that's what the picture comes to, spending time with this fellow, with just enough story to show Forsyth winking at story requirements. And what makes it even neater is that he directs the same way he writes—with all the skill that he needs and no compulsion to prove that he has it.

His hero is a thirtyish Glasgow disc jockey, chatty and well-liked in the city. He is played by Bill Paterson, perfectly. Paterson looks like a reticent Scottish cousin of Christopher Plummer, and he earns the corniest critical comment: he doesn't seem to to be acting. Forsyth may have shaped the part to fit the actor (whom I've never seen before): if so, this was a good idea for both of them because together they give the role components of cautious vigor, accessible tenderness, reluctant anger.

The film opens in a Glasgow department store on Christmas Eve, with a surprise that's a perfect opening chord for what follows. It prepares us for the next development: Paterson's girlfriend, the lovely Eleanor David, to whom he's devoted, suddenly moves out. She tells him this just after they have made love, adding that she had meant to tell him ages ago but that the occasion never arose. (One of the "travelogue" bonuses of the film is that David, like all the attractive and stylish young women in the film, speaks broad Glaswegian. This continually surprises and delights.)

So here is Paterson, at the beginning of the season of comfort and joy, bereft of the girl he loves, having to go to the radio station every morning and be cheery for a couple of hours. Lonely, he is attracted to a pretty young saleswoman in a passing ice cream van. (No explanation of why there are ice cream vans on the Glasgow streets in late December.) In his red sports car Paterson follows the van until it parks in a lonely spot, then buys a cone. He's about to eat it when two men in ski masks drive up and beat in the windows of the van with iron bars. (One of the van vandals recognizes the petrified Paterson as the disc jockey and asks for an autograph before he speeds away.) It turns out that there is an ice cream war in Glasgow between two factions, that all the participants are Italian, and that behind it all is a *capo* who is, to plunder Wallace Stevens, "the emperor of ice cream."

The story is too simple to be explained. I note only two elements. The rival gangs want Paterson to serve as peace emissary between them. He demurs, and they force him into it. How? They leave a dozen ice cream cones upside down on the front seat of his car. That's Forsyth's idea of mob violence. And his Italians, who speak Italian among themselves, speak broad Glaswegian to Paterson. I couldn't help remembering the way Woody Allen treated Italians in *Broadway Danny Rose*. Allen mocked, expecting to be forgiven because he also mocked himself. Forsyth chuckles. Forgiveness doesn't enter into it.

A couple of glitches. A comic scene with a psychiatrist is just one more comic scene with a psychiatrist. A radio executive, speaking of a contract, uses the phrase "sanity clause," which, es-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Amadeus. Nonsense, biographically and thematically. But deftly executed, with some Mozart passages to hear, some gorgeousness to look at, and a good performance from F. Murray Abraham as Salieri. (Reviewed 10/22/84)

Bizet's Carmen. The best "orthodox" opera film that I know, writhing sinuously around the screen as Carmen herself does. All three principals sing well, Julia Migenes-Johnson also performs well. The whole familiar work sounds and looks fresh. (9/17&24/84)

A Soldier's Story. Has the feel of a 1950s "liberal" film but is more smartly done. The murder of a black army sergeant on a Louisiana base in 1944 is investigated by a black captain, undeterred by black and white interference. (10/5/84)

Stranger than Paradise. An intelligent, dry, small-scale American film about three laid-back young people, drifting along on a sluggish current. Subtle and witty. (10/29/84)

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pecially at Christmastime, is misunderstood. Isn't this a lift from Chico in *A Night at the Opera*? ("There ain't no sanity clause.")

But then there are the squabbles among the hulking sons of the *capo* about choice bits of cake when they stop for coffee. And there is Paterson walking across the huge garage floor of an ice cream company, passing two men who are recording a jingle to be played over the vans' speakers. One man tinkles the chimes, and the man next to him purses up his mouth and says "Hellooo, folks!"—just as Paterson passes en route to a gang meeting. I could watch moments like that for a long time.

I hope Forsyth keeps his word about never making films outside his home territory. I hope he keeps on being casual. The Scots have a word, "pawky," which the Concise Oxford defines as "drily humorous." I hope Forsyth keeps on being pawky.

Sidney Lumet, otherwise gifted, has made comedies but has never shown much gift for comedy, and in *Garbo Talks*, he keeps on showing not much gift. The script is by Larry Grusin, who has previously written TV films and has now moved, but not really. It's all based on one plot gimmick. Some wines don't travel well from the winery; some stories don't travel well from the story conference. And Lumet's oppressive hand only helps to thin it out quickly.

It's one of those New York stories about Jews that don't dare to say so outside of intonation and quirk. *Garbo Talks* is a mother-son situation. She is a compulsive protester and demonstrator, who lost her husband because of her activities and is still getting arrested as her way of life. The part is written with a very leaden pencil (Mom protesting through cell bars because she can't get a drink of water), and the heaviness is emphasized by Anne Bancroft whose idea of comedy is a conviction that vulgarity is something we all secretly treasure. The son, once again a well-meaning shnook, is played by a relative newcomer, Ron Silver, apparently on Lumet's assumption that what American film needs is another Gene Wilder.

Gimmick: Mom adores Garbo. Mom learns she has a brain tumor and will die in a few months. Her last request: she wants to meet Garbo. Obedient son

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takes a leave from his job, loses his wife (Freudians, note) in his efforts to fulfill his mother's wish, and goes through a number of bone-crushingly unfunny adventures trying to reach Garbo. At last he meets her—accidentally, of course. (We see only the back of a tall woman and hear a few husky words.) "Garbo" complies and visits Mom. Presumably Garbo had to give permission for her "appearance" in the film. What does she think of *Garbo Talks*? Garbo isn't talking.

One scene I'm now sentenced to carry in my head forever is Bancroft, displaying unconquerable spirit, getting out of her deathbed with walkman plugs in her ears to do a few dance steps.

Not pawky.

EDWARD ROTHSTEIN ON MUSIC

Mozart à la Mode

By the time Despina came onstage dressed in a white Ghostbusters jumpsuit and pointed a laser gun at Ferrando and Guglielmo (who looked suspiciously like Steve Martin and Dan Ackroyd's two "wild and crazy guys"), it was obvious to all that this was not your usual *Cosi fan Tutti*. Mozart's opera, after all, would seem to have little to do with such "Saturday Night Live" humor, so generously served up when Peter Sellars recently directed the work as part of the Castle Hill Festival near Boston. The work also hardly calls for Don Alfonso to be a bitter, disgruntled Vietnam veteran, his hair pulled back in a a pigtail, or for Congress to block the funds for "Reagan's Central American adventurism" and so cause the lovers' reunion.

It would be easy enough, in fact, to dismiss this all as nonsense, hardly worthy of serious attention. What were these characters doing, seated at green vinyl booths in a diner where a pink neon sign declared "Coffee Shop"? Why did they gesture incessantly and throw Busby Berkeley kicks? Why, in the program notes, was Fiordiligi compared with a "leader of a women's consciousness-raising group"? Why, in fact, bother with *Cosi* at all, if Mr. Sellars wanted to create some gimmick-laden comedy full of contemporary allusions?

Why, indeed. And why bother writing about it either? Before August, I had heard of Mr. Sellars's work but never seen any of it. Mr. Sellars, for whom opera direction is a primary passion, was a dramatic prodigy while a student at Harvard. He has since gone on to a rather sensational career, in all senses of the word. At age 26, Mr. Sellars has already directed a production at the Chicago Lyric Opera, has become a MacArthur Prize Fellow, and beginning this season he is artistic director and chief operating officer of the American National Theater at Washington's Kennedy Center. But these distinguished, staid credentials, judging from the reports in the popular press, are just examples of institutions fashionably panting after the iconoclasm of the pop avant-garde. After all, in Mr. Sellars's *Mikado* Nanki-Poo was a rock star; he set Handel's *Orlando* on Mars and Haydn's *Arminda* in Vietnam. Mr. Sellars is self-consciously "brilliant," a lover of *scandale*.

Yet when I interviewed him last spring for a piece in *The New York Times*, he was articulate and serious, insisting on intellectual integrity; he spoke of opera direction with passion and even a bit of love. So I thought it was worth at least a trip to the Boston area to see this new *Cosi*, staged outdoors on the grounds of an estate as part of a summer music festival. Before Mr. Sellars undertook his first mainstream commitment at the Kennedy Center, this *Cosi* could serve as a sign: how serious was this *enfant terrible*, how much an *enfant* and how *terrible*?

It was a good opera with which to test Mr. Sellars's intentions as well. *Cosi* is not new to violent transformations and revisions. A success in Mozart's lifetime, the opera has since been treated like a bastard child. Beethoven thought it frivolous. Wagner was grateful the music was as supposedly trivial as the libretto; it proved his point that text and music were intimately wed. The story has been considered absurd, tasteless; it has been either bowdlerized or discarded. Consider it: two men bet Don Alfonso, cynic extraordinaire, that their lovers, a pair of sisters, will always be true to them. In return Alfonso dresses these innocents in impenetrable Albanian disguises, in which each woos the other's lover. After a few hours the men find that the sisters are all-too-ready to betray them—by marrying their Albanian alter egos. "Cosi fan tutti," goes Alfonso's lesson about women—"That's the way they are," to render it loosely.

It is perhaps only natural that this lesson, so baldly stated in the text, would not be too readily accepted in recent decades either. Our age's *Cosi*'s may be determined to show that the meaning of the work's subtitle, *A School for Lovers*, is only ironically summed up in Alfonso's proclamation. For our time, it would seem, the work needs to be "rescued" from its traditions and its apparent simplicity.

Mr. Sellars's is a peculiar sort of rescue. Musically this *Cosi*—along with, reportedly, his other projects—was orthodox, literal; the text, the original Italian. With eyes closed to setting and staging, this uncut *Cosi* sounded, under Craig Smith's conducting, sensitive and robust. Only with eyes open did Mr. Sellars seem as if he were himself a slightly diabolical Alfonso, dressing up this opera in bizarre foreign costumes, spicing it with subplots, all the while attempting to prove (as if on a bet) that he was being faithful to its lessons and meanings—making it not just a school for lovers, but a school for opera lovers.

AND here is the still jolting fact: this production was extraordinary—at once raucous and subtle, touching and parodistic. The audience the night I attended was silent, attentive, laughing out loud at Mozart's comedy (and Mr. Sellars's interpretations), moved by Mozart's revelations. The production's challenges derived not from provocation, but from care; its failures derived not from extravagance, but from considered reflection. The cast—Susan Larson as Fiordiligi; Freda Herseth as Dorabella; Sue Ellen Kuzma as Despina; James Maddalena as Guglielmo; Carroll Freeman as Ferrando; and Sanford Sylvan as Don Alfonso—was a well-trained ensemble that dramatically, if not vocally, put our best houses to

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shame. I disagreed strongly with much that I saw, but I saw enough to believe that Mr. Sellars is already one of our most important opera directors. This production, it is rumored, may be revived this winter: it is worth a trip. And if Mr. Sellars's appointment to the Kennedy Center is being regarded by some with dismay, it should also be accompanied by no small degree of interest.

COSI begins in what Da Ponte called a "*bottega di cafe*" and what Mr. Sellars called a Coffee Shop. Ferrando and Guglielmo are in the midst of protestations, arguing with Don Alfonso that their loved ones are as faithful as they are fair. The two men almost follow a clichéd script for loyal lovers: they threaten to draw their swords to prove their point, and when Alfonso declines, they invoke the sentimental attributes of the era as proofs of the integrity of their dear Dorabella and Fiordiligi—sublimity, character, nobility. Alfonso proposes a bet and the men agree; they will discard their script to follow Alfonso's, obeying his every direction "like soldiers"—and, in fact, they pretend to go off to war. When Alfonso informs the women of the men's departure, there are, in turn, the women's posings and protestations, what might be called the "requisites" of love: "Plunge your blade into this heart!" "Ah, no, no, do not go!" "I would rather die at your feet!" Mozart's music draws on stock musical figures for sadness and weeping.

Mr. Sellars immediately established a similar style for himself. In the opening scene, the men were choreographed in their vigorous arm movements and protestations, slapping the table, pointing at chests, poised ready to fight. When the women are later amorously transfixed upon the portraits of their lovers, they swoon in equally formal, staged motions, along with the music which is fragile, overly delicate, mannered. The women's melodramatic invocations of suicide are accompanied by the rise and fall of butter knives, pointed at their hearts.

The entire opera, in Mr. Sellars's version, was shown to thrive on stock images, formal behavior, and shared gesture. Personalities, at first, are totally unimportant, even nonexistent. The characters generally move in pairs, singing duets in tight parallel thirds. Each of the two acts also has an aria for each character, and the arias are rigorously grouped in related key schemes. Badly conducted, even some of the music might seem little more than formulaic. But well played and sensitively directed, the opera can seem to be about such gestures, about the requisites and forms of love and passion.

Mr. Sellars certainly had something like that in mind. He has been a student of gesture, having worked with the Theater of the Deaf and having devoted attention to Kabuki theater while in Japan; the flavor of those enterprises was merged here with gracious Mozartean movement. Mr. Sellars's choreography was lyrical, possessing a tone of sympathy surprisingly suited to Mozart's own gestures, whether in the earnestly busy and ironically celebratory music of the opening scenes, or the poignant pause in the midst of the farce as the women pray "Soave sia il vento"—"Gentle be the breeze"—as their men supposedly go off to war.

The recognition of the importance of cliché and gesture in the very substance of the opera is also what led to some of Mr. Sellars's most seemingly outrageous provocations. Mr. Sellars has argued that operas deal in "stereotypes"—images and characters and gestures, which are part of the language of its culture. But over the last two centuries, as opera has become almost exclusively a "museum" form, these conventions have become commonplace, relics with power and meaning drained away. Mr. Sellars's goal is to undo the commonplace, "to re-create the impact the first night performance had on an audience, to re-create it as it was." This peculiar authenticity does not restore a work to its origins; instead each element of the opera's imagistic language is translated into a contemporary equivalent. In his "coffee shop," for example, Mr. Sellars found a modern setting for *Cosi*'s braggadocio and sexual banter (as in the film *Diner*).

The dangers of this technique are obvious. In the program notes, for example, Mr. Sellars insists that Alfonso is a Vietnam veteran and that the men are going off to fight in Central America. Perhaps Alfonso's manipulations are meant to be devastating comments on military life; but such an imposition of commonplace contemporary attitudes upsets Mozart's own more subtle parallels. The military life in the opera—celebrated in "Bella vita militar!"—is a metaphorical parallel to Alfonso's love plot:

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the lovers are indeed soldiers fighting for victory in their bets and victory in their seductions. For Mozart, war and love are masques, but neither is to be scorned. Mr. Sellars's rather crude "innovation" ruled out complexities and served no purpose.

But others of Mr. Sellars's ideas, however outrageous at first, were acutely playful. The men, appearing as "wild and crazy guys," are a contemporary transformation of the exaggerations in the original with its absurdly disguised Albanians. And when Despina, a quick-talking, cynical waitress instead of a saucy servant, dresses in a Ghostbuster's uniform after the Albanians have supposedly swigged poison, she is a contemporary version of the Despina who in the original, no less farcically, is disguised as a medieval physician who speaks Turkish, Swabian, and Tartar. This modern healer uses her laser gun, shaking it at the men's most private parts, just as Mozart had her shaking a magnet over their bodies in the fashion of Dr. Mesmer, a trill sounding with each shake.

MR. SELLARS thus attempts to reinterpret conventions found in a conventional form, to give them the same contemporary force they had when new. The intellectual gamesmanship of the director can often seem like mere gimmickry, supplanting all sense of convention; but the effort often enough succeeds. After all, Mozart wanted this scene to be outrageous; his absurdly disguised characters take on still more absurd roles. But he makes it quite clear that this play within a play within a play also has serious implications. The men are intoxicated with their parts; they are earnestly attempting to seduce their lovers and so undo themselves. Despina's curative powers lead to uncertain realms, quivering souls, darkening suns, unformed words—the images Dorabella and Fiordiligi invoke. The seriousness is all the more poignant because of the ludicrousness of the masque. "The comedy is delightful," raves Don Alfonso early in the opera. "Both are playing their parts well"; but he adds later, seeing the progress of his game: "I know it's bound to end in tears."

Without those tears, without revealing the gaps in these formal farces, Mr. Sellars would have missed the whole point; if he had left the images as they were, but neglected the music, there would have been just a pop campiness to the production. But Mr. Sellars understood precisely how Mozart also plays at once with the obvious and the deeply disturbing. Each aria was evidently scrutinized for its tone. In "Come scoglio," for example, Fiordiligi insists that she is "a rock standing impervious" to the insinuating seductive overtures of the Albanians (and her disguised lover); it is often thought of as a Mozartean parody, the composer's exaggerated mocking of fidelity in *opera seria*, with Fiordiligi militantly posing with clenched teeth and determined chastity. Mr. Sellars staged this aria so that parody was out of the question; he discerned in the play of the music's phrasing the push and pull of Fiordiligi's consciousness, which appeared literally on stage with Dorabella herself as the impervious rock, straining to supply her sister with strength and determination, while the men work their physical charms.

And Ferrando's love aria in the first act was treated as a moment, such as appears again and again in the opera, in which the texture of masque becomes partly undone, in which deep feeling is revealed behind manners and form. Ferrando sings on a darkened stage, in a spotlight, as if the entire masque had disappeared but for his voice; Alfonso hears this opera in the background, visibly moved by it as by nothing else in the opera. He begins to doubt if in fact he should continue with the wager at all.

THESE moments break apart the forms and formulae, showing natural forces underneath the farce; it is the pattern of the opera. If the opening scenes, for example, seem merely formal, in the central scenes, where the masque is at its most earnest, the characters become most dramatically "real," least afflicted with artifice and convention. The men become distinct personalities—Guglielmo more physical, vain, living in the immediate; Ferrando more heady, reflective, more touched by the dangers of his masquerade. By the time the second act begins, the men do not dutifully draw their swords or swear by their women's fidelity. They have discarded such gestures and are now genuinely in love—except that they are each wooing the other's lover. This twist, that the men in disguise are actively pursuing the lover of their friend, the sister of their lover, is Mozart's most poignant move, making the desire that much more tinged with sorrow, as he himself knew, having wooed one sister and married the other. So here, each lover causes the downfall of the other, until all are bound in sadness.

BUT WHAT Mr. Sellars also does—and this, aside from creating a too crudely physical relationship between Alfonso and Despina, is the major interpretive transformation he works on the opera—is to have the women, by the beginning of the second act, suspect what is going on, to have seen, in the intimate moments of the first act finale, that their own original lovers are posing as Albanians. Not only do they suspect the truth, they also become partners in the masquerade; and thus become as culpable and as knowledgeable as the men. The women themselves *choose* their partners in the second act, and invert the original choices; Dorabella chooses Fiordiligi's lover and vice versa. Neither admits this conscious knowledge to the other, though both feel its thrill in Mr. Sellars's staging. As Mr. Sellars puts it, "the frisson at the thought of this joke has an ecstatic quality"—their duet is all sport and pleasure, but their question to their lovers in the libretto, "What is this masquerade?" takes on more serious meanings.

It is a daring and disturbing interpretive move, one which gives the entire second act a different tone. The men here succeed in their seductions and both are terrified at their success. But Mr. Sellars's twist makes the ambiguities still more intricate: Dorabella is distraught not just because she has betrayed her original lover, but because she has knowingly, and as part of this peculiar masque, betrayed her sister, and no one acknowledges what has happened.

In the opera's traditional stagings, both sisters arrange to wed their Albanian lovers, only to be faced suddenly with the army returning home and their real lovers confronting them. In Mr. Sellars's version the wedding is more confounding because it is so full of deception and sorrow for all involved, and the betrayals are so intricate that the finale cannot be a resolution. The lovers hope in the finale to "find beautiful calm." But instead, Mr. Sellars notes, "the opera ends as they scream the words 'beautiful calm' against gale force turbulence in the orchestra." Despina, Alfonso, Dorabella, Guglielmo, Fiordi-

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ligi, and Ferrando spin on stage, each cut off from the other as the music exhausts itself. This is a peculiarly contemporary ending, one of symmetries and sexual politics. The women bear as much guilt and confusion and pain as the men who plotted the masquerade; all the formal manners of courtship and love decay into entropic chaos. The result is almost nihilistic, certainly more cynical than Alfonso dreamed; even he is bewildered, the women having shown him more than he imagined. Mr. Sellars began the opera as if agreeing with Mozart; and then, for the sake of a contemporary trick, he shifted the work's focus. What happens in Mr. Sellars's version is simple: everybody has betrayed each other.

It is not Mozart's vision. For the composer, love is not just a matter of natural passion but of staged relations, of formal gestures. This makes love not a defined condition between people, but something more subtle, more fragile. To say "I love you" is to invoke all the vagaries of our culture's masques. And the pain also comes from the recognition that such gestures cannot be eliminated. There is no way for the men and the women in this opera to establish relations of natural passion. The music displays this again and again, its rhetorical flourishes serving not as signs of insincerity or farce, but as the means by which profound feelings are reached, lying just beyond articulation. Love at the end is tainted: but it is the love we all know. The gestures of chivalry and protest, of affection and seduction, of painful revelation, are part of the very substance of love, not its downfall. Love, Mozart would have insisted, is an art, molded from pain and manners.

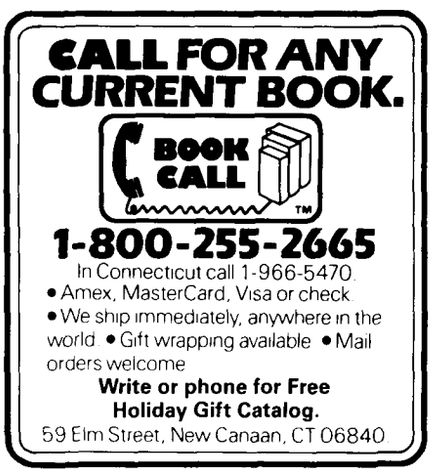
Mr. Sellars, it would seem, has yet to apply a similar lesson to his directing. He is attempting to take an art form, opera, which, like the love in *Cosi*, is founded upon inherited gesture and manners. And he is attempting to find the power, long since lost or turned into fetishistic fan chatter, which lies under the operatic surface. He wants to turn the operas loose, "like animals," he has said, beings of natural force and power. Thus he is increasing the artifice, as if by suffusing the play with jarring pop images, something may be shocked from its center. But this means injecting into the drama not the force of its origins, but the self-conscious mark of its director and its performance. It is as if the balance between nature and culture, so precariously worked out by Mozart, were being upset, with one masque just replacing another.

Yet after seeing this *Cosi*, I no longer think Mr. Sellars's project is impossible; there is much that was revealed both despite and because of Mr. Sellars's direction. It is also a project that in one degree or another is haunting other opera directors, who are also becoming the premier characters in their dramas, particularly because opera as a vital form is on the decline; instead of hearing new works, we attempt to make new the old. Like Don Alfonso himself, Mr. Sellars is by no means to be scorned or dismissed. His drama is a school for opera lovers. I learned, even when I bristled. Mr. Sellars's career in Washington should provide an opportunity to learn much more.

VIEWS AND REVIEWS. Most of our major musical institutions are in a state of flux, adapting themselves to commerce, attempting to define some aesthetic position in a world where contemporary musical life languishes, and where the repertory of one European century dominates our musical life. So it is of some interest that The Juilliard School—the most important music school in the country—has announced the appointment of a new president. Juilliard attracts the most talented young musicians. It is also an institution in need of direction: it is no longer identified with a vital style of performance and does not have a strong impact on the compositional community; it has become a professional school providing trained personnel.

Since June 1983, the search committee is rumored to have interviewed and consulted with nearly every important member of the musical community, ranging from Leonard Bernstein, Isaac Stern, and Robert Mann, to John Harbison and Philip Glass. But the committee itself was singularly lacking in musicians of significance and its concerns may have been elsewhere. It was known, for example, to have expressed serious concern over the social life of its students and over the poor record of Juilliard alumni in making financial contributions to the school.

So the committee apparently decided to break with tradition. The last two presidents were both important composers, and reigned over the institution for about two decades each—the late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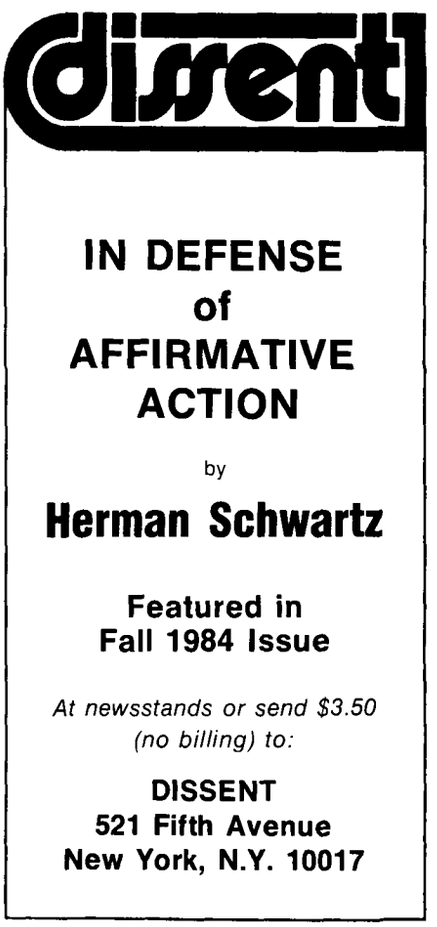

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Peter Mennin, from 1962 to 1983, and before him, William Schuman. The new president is the 36-year-old Joseph W. Polisi. Mr. Polisi is a trained musician but his professional experience is as an administrator at the Manhattan School of Music and the University of Cincinnati.

The decision was the subject of much surprise in the musical community, but it could have been expected. Music institutions now habitually place more emphasis on administrative and marketing activities than on artistic vision. Mr. Polisi can change that now, if he chooses.

American interests and the island's identity.

THE PROBLEM OF PUERTO RICO

BY ROBERT PASTOR

NOT without reason, most Americans would like to forget Puerto Rico. It reminds us of a colonial past we wish hadn't happened. The present is also discomforting: the United States provides over $800 million of food stamps each year to the island, but instead of receiving gratitude, it is condemned for colonialism at the United Nations by Puerto Ricans representing the full political spectrum on the island. Neither the past nor the present, however, should trouble Americans as much as the future.

"All the island's political parties are dissatisfied" with Commonwealth status and determined to change it, according to a recent U.S. government report. Unfortunately, the parties are sharply divided as to what should replace the current status. The three options are independence, statehood, and a revised Commonwealth status, and the major political parties are defined in terms of their support for one of these options. The pro-autonomist Commonwealth Party wants to retain a tie to the United States, but also wants greater authority over immigration, tariffs, commercial relations with foreign countries, and greater flexibility to adjust U.S. policy, for example, on minimum wages. Accepting any one of the three proposals for new relations may prove one of the most difficult challenges the United States faces in the next decade. Change could provoke violence on the island and on the mainland; it could prompt angry condemnations from friendly countries in Latin America. If the United States mismanaged the transition, the result could be a new strategic problem in an already unstable Caribbean.

If these four books and Puerto Rico's politicians are to be believed, change is coming, and the United States is wholly unprepared for it. If Carlos Romero Barcelo, the governor and statehood candidate, is reelected this November, statehooders will hold a plebiscite on status soon after that. If they win 51 percent of the vote, they will demand statehood from Congress. Americans will then be forced—as they haven't been for thirty years—to make a decision on Puerto Rico. Should the United States accept statehood if only 51 percent of Puerto Ricans are in favor of it? What if the other major party, the pro-autonomy Popular Democratic Party, boycotts the plebiscite? What if a small terrorist group assassinates American leaders or bombs government buildings and threatens more violence if Congress grants statehood? Should the U.S. Congress accept the statehooders' demands for Spanish as its official language, for the federal government to assume its debt of more than $8 billion, and for a postponement in paying federal taxes for ten years? What would happen on the island if Congress rejects these conditions? Would we then convert a close family friend into a bitterly resentful neighbor? Would the U.S. Congress accept independence for the island if there were a possibility that Cuban-supported Marxist-Leninists might come to power?

Finding answers to these questions on the island as well as on the mainland has proved so difficult that Americans have tried not to ask them. Puerto Rico is likely to be an important issue which will go unmentioned in this Presidential campaign. But if Romero wins the November 6 election, these vexing questions will no longer wait, and avoiding them will be costly. Statehooders on the island will be risking their *dignidad*: if the United States rejects them or, worse, ignores their plea, they might very well demand independence, as Governor Romero once before threatened. Under those circumstances, the United Nations might well step in and demand that the United States get out. Then what?

We are very fortunate that a number of writers have been anticipating these problems, and have done much of our homework. These four books address the questions from complementary perspectives: from that of a detached European (Carr), an impassioned Puerto Rican (García), a group of specialists (Heine), and a Puerto Rican statesman (Morales Carrión). Together, the books provide a sturdy bridge to return to the Puerto Rican predicament, correct past mistakes, and avoid any future ones. Since Puerto Rico may become a foreign and domestic challenge as tough as the fourteen-year ordeal of the Panama Canal Treaties, these books should be required reading.

THE UNITED States acquired Puerto Rico almost by accident. When President William McKinley succumbed to the pressures in his party to go to war against Spain in 1898, American attention was focused on liberating Cuba. To prove that U.S. motives were purer than those of European imperialists, Congress added to the declaration of war the Teller Amendment, which denied any intention to annex Cuba. Nothing was said about Puerto Rico because few even knew about the island. Robert T. Hill, an American geologist who finished a book on the West Indies shortly before the war, observed that Puerto Rico was less known to the United States than even Madagascar. "The sum total of scientific literature of the island," Hill wrote at the time, "would hardly fill a page."

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On July 25, 1898, American soldiers went ashore on Puerto Rico, and the conquering General Nelson Miles promised "to give to the people of your beautiful island the largest measure of liberty . . . [and] to bestow upon you . . . the liberal institutions of our government." Believing him, Puerto Ricans welcomed the Americans.

But liberty and liberal institutions were granted slowly, grudgingly, and never completely. The basic structure of the U.S.-Puerto Rican relationship was established with the Foraker Act of 1900. The United States would defend Puerto Rico and provide its currency. By 1902, it would dismantle all barriers to trade between the island and the mainland. Puerto Ricans would not pay federal income taxes, nor could those living on the island vote for Congress or the President, even though they became U.S. citizens in 1917. The United States was not willing to consider the island a potential state or an actual colony; a new term was coined, "unincorporated territory." Puerto Rico belongs to the United States, but is not part of the United States. The awkwardness and ambiguity inherent in this concept have continued to contort the relationship.

Over time Congress enlarged the scope of self-government. Puerto Ricans were granted the power to elect a lower house of their legislature in 1900, and the upper house in 1917. In 1948 Puerto Ricans elected their own chief executive, and four years later Puerto Rico freely chose to associate with the United States as a Commonwealth.

While García-Passalacqua tends to see a clear thread of colonialism connecting almost every decision taken by Congress on Puerto Rico, Raymond Carr shows that there has been nothing inevitable or even planned in the way the United States acquired or governed the island. Indeed, he characterizes the acquisition as occuring by "the politics of inadvertence," and the governing as the policy of "selective inattention." At every decision there were those in Congress and among the general public arguing for equality, and those who felt—for reasons which evolved over time—that U.S. stewardship or "tutorship" was essential. McKinley asked the Reverend Henry Carroll to visit Puerto Rico and advise him on the proper course, and Carroll concluded that the only way Puerto Ricans would learn self-government was "by having its responsibilities laid upon them, by learning from their blunders." Neither McKinley nor Congress took Carroll's advice, believing, as Presidents Taft and Coolidge later did, "that, far from meriting more self-government, the Puerto Ricans already possessed more self-government than was good for them." Fifty years later, finally learning from its own repeated blunders, the U.S. permitted Puerto Ricans to elect their own governor. Fortunate for all, Puerto Ricans had the wisdom to elect Luis Muñoz Marín, who dominated the island's politics for the next two decades.

"COMMONWEALTH," or its Spanish equivalent "Estado Libre Asociado" (free associated state), was hailed in 1952 as a conceptual breakthrough, an exquisite resolution of Puerto Rico's need for a relationship with the United States, which was somewhere between independence and annexation. With the distance permitted by three decades, Raymond Carr describes the birth of the new status as a "brilliant performance in psychopolitics by a master politician," Luis Muñoz Marín. Like many Caribbean leaders, Muñoz, the son of one of Puerto Rico's leading politicians, was educated in the metropolis—the United States. There he soon learned that the best way to unlock the gate of colonialism was to persuade the guard to give him the key.

Puerto Rico: A Colonial Experiment by Raymond Carr (New York University Press, 477 pp., $25)

Puerto Rico: Equality and Freedom At Issue by Juan M. García-Passalacqua (Praeger, 192 pp., $27.95)

Time For Decision: The United States and Puerto Rico edited by Jorge Heine (The North-South Publishing Company, 303 pp., $12.95)

Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural Odyssey by Arturo Morales Carrión (Norton, 384 pp., $19.50, $8.95 paper)

An advocate of independence in his youth, Muñoz went into the hills of Puerto Rico to build a political party in the late 1930s and found the peasants much more interested in food and land than in political status. Convinced by this clear message from the people and by a report on the devastating economic implications of independence, Muñoz decided to seek a "third way." "Free Associated State" was a political compromise between what Muñoz and many Puerto Ricans wanted politically and what they needed economically. Moreover, Muñoz skillfully varied the interpretation of the new status so as to give each audience a feeling they had prevailed. To Congress, Muñoz stressed continuity; in Puerto Rico, he emphasized the break with the past. To statehooders, he noted the word "state"; to autonomists, "association" with the United States; to *independentistas*, the word "free" and the adoption by the island of their national flag and anthem. Commonwealth satisfied everyone for a moment, but no one for long. It did succeed, however, in pushing the status issue off the agenda for an entire generation, and during that time Puerto Rico was transformed rather spectacularly from the "poorhouse of the Caribbean" to the "model of democracy," which served as an inspiration for the Alliance for Progress.

In 1941 Franklin Roosevelt sent a member of his "brain trust," Rexford Tugwell, to Puerto Rico as governor. Until then U.S. governors had been mostly insensitive to the local population; otherwise, they were insulting. To take just one of a legion of examples, E. Montgomery Reily of Kansas City, who was appointed governor in the 1920s after contributing $11,000 to President Harding's campaign, never bothered to learn anything about the island. This did not inhibit him, however, from insulting every leading Puerto Rican politician, calling one "a crook," another "a professional double-crosser," and characterizing the whole body of politicians as "unsteady," with a lamentable propensity for living with "negro women."

U.S. economic policy relied on the magic of the marketplace, but poverty, disease, and illiteracy did not go away with the wave of the wand. The Depression hit the mainland hard, but it almost knocked out Puerto Rico. When Tugwell arrived in 1941 per capita income was about $150; and life expectancy was 46. Tugwell recognized the political genius of Muñoz, and struck a partnership.

The economic development strategy, which the two of them forged, included the following elements: first, substantial incentives for investment (via exemptions from federal and local taxes); second, agrarian reform, which involved dismantling the large sugar trusts and limiting the size of farms to

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less than five hundred acres; third, fourteen publicly operated corporations; fourth, massive infusions of capital into schools, hospitals, and infrastructure; and fifth, central economic planning. World War II provided the strategic stimulus for Washington's support for the island's economic development. The U.S. Naval Base at Roosevelt Roads was vital to the war effort, and it was easy to convince Washington that the security of the base depended on the political stability and economic development of the island. Remittances from the many Puerto Rican servicemen also helped considerably.

THE foundation built during the war permitted the unprecedented economic expansion and modernization which continued until the mid-1970s. The gross domestic product of Puerto Rico expanded from $287 million in 1940 to $7.1 billion in 1975; in constant 1954 dollars, the product multiplied almost seven times, from $499 million to $3.4 billion. Per capita income in constant dollars almost quadrupled between 1950 and 1973. The "poorman" of the 1930s had the highest per capita income in Latin America by 1968. At the height of "Operation Bootstrap" in the 1950s, one factory was established every day on the island. The social advances were equally dramatic. In thirty years, life expectancy increased thirty years; enrollment in secondary schools doubled.

In his analysis of Puerto Rico's economic ascent, Carr presents an eloquent critique of both the radical thesis that the United States exploited Puerto Rico and the conservative thesis that its success was the result of the free enterprise system and local initiative. He attributes Puerto Rico's development to the central planning introduced by Tugwell and Muñoz in the 1940s, to U.S. (foreign) investment, which benefited Puerto Rico even as it evaded U.S. federal taxes, and to the migration which relieved the island of much of its surplus labor in the 1950s. "Impressive though the achievements of its planners were," Carr wrote, "Puerto Rico did not so much pull itself up by its own bootstraps but rather was hoisted up by massive injections of capital from the U.S." This terse characterization is both insensitive to Puerto Rico's own efforts and not entirely accurate. One of the keys to development is management, and Muñoz succeeded in attracting a generation of young Puerto Ricans who made the plan work. Most notable was Teodoro Moscoso, who organized FOMENTO, the Commonwealth agency responsible for economic development, and who was later appointed by President Kennedy to be coordinator of the Alliance for Progress and Ambassador to Venezuela.

Still, there is no questioning the enormous economic impact of the United States on Puerto Rico—for good and for ill. When the economic boom in the United States burst in the mid-1970s, investment plunged in Puerto Rico and unemployment soared. The Commonwealth political-economic model, which appeared so tenacious in the 1950s and 1960s, became tenuous, indeed precarious, in the 1970s and 1980s. There is considerable debate among the four authors, and among the island's politicians, over the extent to which the current status can be blamed for the economic downturn. Obviously the strongest advocates of statehood and independence are most inclined to blame Commonwealth for the island's current economic and social problems. But even those more sympathetic to the existing status, like Morales Carrión, accept the need for political change. To understand why, one needs to recognize the changes that have occurred in Puerto Rico, the United States, and the Caribbean in the last thirty years.

IN HIS fine introductory essay in *Time For Decision*, a collection of pieces by a talented array of scholars, Jorge Heine, the director of the Caribbean Institute and Study Center for Latin America at Puerto Rico's Inter-American University, offers the best concise assessment of the achievements, failures, and changes wrought by the Commonwealth experience. The increasing power of the statehood movement has been the pivot around which the status issue has rotated. The statehood party, the New Progressive Party (P.N.P.), has won three of the last four gubernatorial elections. The retirement of the charismatic Muñoz in 1964 gave them an opening. The recession in the mid-1970s gave them an argument—that Commonwealth was exhausted, and indeed was limiting Puerto Rico's potential. Reaganomics, which cut sharply into Puerto Rico's food stamp program, gave them another argument, that the island could only be protected from such harsh and discriminatory cuts with full Congressional representation (seven Representatives, two Senators), which only statehood could bring.

However incongruous, statehooders have become the most aggressive and militant (though nonviolent) political movement on the island. At a party convention last April, 8,000 delegates roared their approval of a resolution that amounts to an initial declaration of statehood if they should win a simple majority in a plebiscite after the November elections. A party spokesperson said that Congress would be forced to accept statehood if the majority of Puerto Rico demanded it. Fearful that the statehood party would weight the question in its own favor, Rafael Hernandez Colon, the leader of the opposition Popular Democratic Party (P.D.P.), threatened to boycott the vote. The P.D.P. admits the current status is unsatisfactory and insists on more autonomy to improve the current situation. Forced on the defensive, the P.D.P. has sometimes sought alliances with the *independentistas* to slow the momentum of the statehooders.

AT THE same time that politics were re-oriented in Puerto Rico, four major changes in the United States have affected the status issue and altered the context for a possible future change. First, in 1959, Hawaii and Alaska, two non-contiguous territories, one with a majority nonwhite population, were admitted into the Union, thus undermining one argument that had been made against statehood at the beginning of the decade. Second, the civil rights movement, which in the early 1960s had begun to erase discrimination against blacks had evolved by the 1980s to "affirmative" demands for political representation, economic equity, and cultural respect for Hispanics, blacks, and other minorities. In the 1950s, a Spanish-speaking state was out of the question; in 1984 both the Democrat and Republican Presidential candidates promise to support Puerto Rican statehood—with explicit respect for Puerto Rico's cultural heritage—if statehood wins a plebiscite.

Third, the dramatic expansion of federal authority over a wide range of domestic activities, which began with Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and continued until Ronald Reagan's election in 1980, has unavoidably eroded local autonomy—the basis of Commonwealth status. Federal aid has had negative political and some positive

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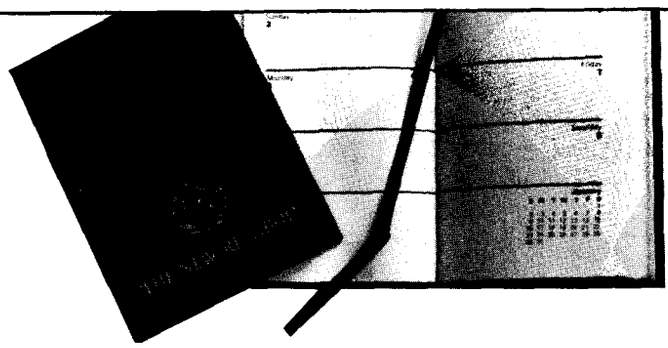
economic consequences. Although not every federal program applies to Puerto Rico, over 500 of them do, and thus when the Puerto Rican economy began to totter in the mid-1970s the federal government kept it from falling. Transfer payments from the federal government increased from $80 million in 1970 to $1.7 billion in 1980; from 2 percent of the disposable income of Puerto Ricans to an average of 17 percent. Because Puerto Rico's per capita income is roughly half that of the poorest state in the United States, by the 1980s nearly two-thirds of all Puerto Ricans received food stamps. It is this top-heavy dependency which enrages *independentistas* and troubles all Puerto Ricans.

Reaganomics brought the island its fourth change. The increased dependence of the island on federal largesse, coupled with an absence of voter representation in Congress, made the island particularly vulnerable to the sharp budgetary cutbacks by the Reagan Administration. Adding insult to injury, after a short meeting with the island's leaders in January 1982, President Reagan in effect withdrew his campaign promise to initiate statehood legislation (made the day before the Republican primary in 1980). According to García, Reagan dwelled on the assassination attempt during the meeting, "implying that the Puerto Rico issue could provoke another." On closing the meeting, President Reagan reportedly took his political ally, San Juan Mayor Hernan Padilla, aside and told him: "You can't keep coming up here asking for a piece of the meal"—food stamps.

PRESIDENT Reagan's most destabilizing decision on Puerto Rico was also his most enlightened decision in the Caribbean—the Caribbean Basin Initiative, which removed U.S. tariffs on most products from the Caribbean Basin. The common market with the United States was Commonwealth Puerto Rico's comparative advantage over the rest of the Caribbean and the developing world and accounted for a large part of Puerto Rico's success. The Caribbean Basin Initiative symbolized the sea change that transformed the Caribbean in the thirty years since Commonwealth was enacted. In 1952 there were only three independent nations in the Caribbean—all with larger populations than Puerto Rico—and there was a consensus that Puerto Rico was simply not viable as an independent nation. Since



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then, thirteen Caribbean nations—all smaller in population than Puerto Rico—became independent. While very few of these new countries are doing as well economically and socially as Puerto Rico, the argument that Puerto Rico cannot make it as an independent state no longer holds any weight internationally; indeed, each year the United States is criticized in more international forums and by more nations for denying Puerto Rico the right of independence. Democracies like Venezuela have joined Cuba, the Socialist International has joined the Non-Aligned Movement, and statehood leaders have joined *independentistas*, to condemn U.S. colonialism each year at the De-Colonization Committee of the United Nations.

In short, political and economic changes in Puerto Rico, the United States, and the world have undermined the current Commonwealth, leaving the relationship in need of a new anchor. "The glamor has worn off Commonwealth," Carr writes. "The message inscribed in 1952 is fading, to reveal beneath it an older inscription: statehood or independence."

WHAT IS to be done, and who is to do it? As each of these books reveals, those are questions that Puerto Ricans are deeply ambivalent about and that Americans have continued to avoid. Raymond Carr, the British historian, offers the most detached view of the tangled situation and the prospects for some steps toward a resolution. His study was commissioned by the Twentieth Century Fund, and is an island of objectivity and clarity in a sea of tendentiousness.

As a scholar of European imperialism and Spanish colonialism in Latin America, Carr can compare the "colonial experiment" of the United States and quickly recognize a few similarities and the major differences. Carr candidly diagnoses the Puerto Rican condition as the product of consent, which is unique to colonial relationships, and internal division, which is not. The United States, however, does not divide and rule; "the Puerto Ricans divide themselves." The status issue, he writes, "divides the claustrophobic political world of Puerto Rico into three discrete spheres of discourse, each supported by its particular myths, its peculiar vision of the past and its specific recommendations for the future."

His analysis of Puerto Rican political psychology provides the most useful introduction for the reader who is new and somewhat baffled by the Puerto Rican predicament. Although he takes a very different path than Heine or García-Passalacqua, Carr arrives at almost the same destination. He urges the United States to take the first step to deal with the status issue before it becomes as impossible to resolve as Northern Ireland.

In Puerto Rico, the voices for change are becoming more strident and impassioned. No one captures the rhetoric and emotion better than Juan García-Passalacqua. Shortly after completing Harvard Law School in the early 1960s, García became an aide to Muñoz; since then he has been a columnist for the *San Juan Star*, a political operator par excellence, and an untiring advocate of increased U.S. attention to Puerto Rico. His book shares the passion of all the political discourse on the island. Still, unlike almost all the island's political propagandists, but like the island as a whole, he cannot decide what position to advocate. It is that ambivalence which makes García's book the ultimate Puerto Rican book on status: it demands change, but neglects to recommend which status should be chosen. "It is now time for the U.S. to decolonize: make us equal or let us go." This may be code for asking the United States to narrow Puerto Rico's choice to statehood or independence, but García never makes this, his central point, explicit. It is clear, however, that he believes the United States must make the first move. A vote by the Puerto Ricans on status, according to García, is meaningless unless Congress first indicates what it can accept.

MORALES Carrión, a distinguished historian and statesman, neither shouts at the United States, as García-Passalacqua sometimes does, nor irritates Puerto Rico, as Carr sometimes does. His most valuable contribution is to recognize and describe the parallel behavior of North Americans and Puerto Ricans. "Puerto Rican contradictions are matched by American contradictions." U.S.-appointed governors accuse Puerto Rican leaders of corruption even while they themselves obtain their jobs through campaign contributions. North Americans accused Puerto Ricans of "petty factionalism" in the 1930s, but Morales Carrión's unemotional account of bureaucratic politics in the United States during the same period leaves the reader with the inescapable conclusion that the term applies more to the accuser than to the accused. The real dilemma, Morales Carrión concludes, is not just that Puerto Ricans are divided, but that the United States is as well. Puerto Ricans are "caught in a century-old dilemma," torn between their economic ties and their "cultural nationality," while the United States remains torn between its idealistic vision and its parochial reflex to maintain the status quo.

MORALES'S insight provides a clue for breaking the deadlock on status. Demands that the United States take the first step are as unrealistic as the current U.S. policy of waiting for Puerto Rico to indicate its preference. The divisions within Puerto Rico inhibit U.S. action, and the hesitation by the United States reinforces Puerto Rican division. The result is no movement and more frustration. The only way to move the debate forward is to stop talking about *self*-determination, and to start developing a process of *mutual* determination. I suggested one such procedure (in the summer issue of *Washington Quarterly*) which involves six rounds of consultations over a number of years between island leaders of all three status positions and leaders from the federal government—both legislative and executive branches. The aim of the consultation is to structure a plebiscite that would be accepted by Congress and would be judged fair by all political parties on the island and by Latin America and other interested international parties and organizations.

But this mechanical proposal is only a way to step into the more substantive issues. And these are so difficult that there are good reasons to want to ignore the Puerto Rican predicament. For one, it is not even certain that Puerto Ricans share their leaders' obsessions with the status issue, and even if they do, existing divisions within the island preclude any easy solution. Moreover, if the status issue is handled poorly, the United States could find itself with at best a local variation on the Quebec problem, and at worst a Northern Ireland tragedy.

But all four books make a compelling ethical, social, and political case for American attention to Puerto Rico. The political problems continue to frustrate some Puerto Ricans and enrage others.

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The social and economic problems are serious and will not be improved by the magic of the marketplace. The extreme dependence on the federal government for handouts is humiliating and a source of acute vulnerability. In thinking about these federal policies that affect the island so massively, it is well to recall, in Carr's words, that "Puerto Ricans are governed by those in whose election they play no part."

It runs against the grain of the American character to have either a permanent privileged class or an underclass. Puerto Rico is a combination of both, and many Puerto Ricans feel the awkwardness of being treated generously but not equally. All Americans should share that sense of awkwardness; it is a testament to the distance of Puerto Rico and our own insensitivity that so few feel it.

SEX AND LOATHING IN SCOTLAND

1982 Janine
by Alasdair Gray
(Viking, 345 pp., $16.95)

Unlikely Stories, Mostly
by Alasdair Gray
(Penguin, 280 pp., $6.95)

1982 Janine is a confession, a venerable form of narrative that goes back to Augustine. Though it is described in the author's self-mocking blurb as "mainly a sado-masochistic fetishistic fantasy," and indeed incorporates large dollops of undiluted pornography, it is essentially a story of conversion, the awakening of conscience and spiritual rebirth. It is a very modern example of the genre, not only in giving rather more attention to sin than to the state of grace, but also in narrative technique. Alasdair Gray is that rather rare bird among contemporary British writers—a genuine experimentalist, transgressing the rules of formal English prose, and its typographical representation, boldly and imaginatively. The influence of James Joyce, and that eighteenth-century avant-gardist Laurence Sterne, is very evident, but Gray does not seem merely derivative from these matters. He is very much his own man.

The novel consists of a long interior monologue (which mutates into a dialogue with himself, and finally with God) by Jock McLeish, a middle-aged supervisor of security installations, divorced, alcoholic, successful but bored in his job, unhappily celibate for the past seven years, as he sprawls on the bed of an anonymous hotel room somewhere in Scotland (though it could be "any land where a room can have wallpaper, carpet and curtains patterned with three different sorts of flower"), with a bottle of whiskey, his memories, and his sexual fantasies.

Janine is a principal character in these fantasies—a Jane Russell look-alike (Jock's adolescent sexual awakening coincided with *The Outlaw*), typically pictured "in a fast car trying not to be afraid, her vulnerable breasts in a white silk shirt, accessible arse in a leather miniskirt, shapely thighs legs feet in black fishnet stockings and, ah! white open-topped shoes with stiletto heels." The scenarios that Jock constructs for Janine are classic male chauvinist fantasies of stripping, bondage, and rape. But his object is to prolong excitement rather than to reach climax: "I hate orgasm, I feel lonely afterwards." Whenever he is in danger of "losing control" he switches to other "heroines in other parts of the forest, women travelling towards climaxes which are different but connected."

There are four of these heroines in all: Janine, Superb, Big Momma, and Helga, corresponding, perhaps to the four real women in Jock's life with whom he has had sexual relations—his wife Helen, her friend Sontag, an anonymous "editor," and his first love, Denny, often significantly referred to as

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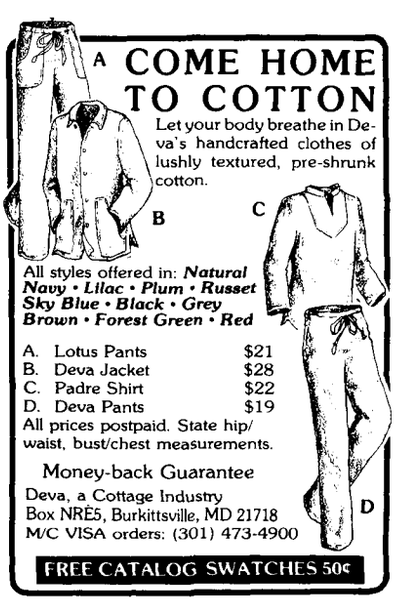

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"forgether." The adventures of the porno-heroines invariably involve abduction and forced conscription into the service of a "vast multinational Forensic Research Punishment and Sexual Gratification Syndicate," of which Jock in one episode imagines himself to be the chairman. Their fortunes interconnect in ways which resemble avant-garde fiction or cinema—one heroine may find herself reading about another in exactly the same situation as herself, speeding in a car to some unknown destination, scantily and sexily dressed.

Jock gives loving attention to the dressing, and undressing, of his heroines.

> Do I like women's clothes more than their bodies? Oh no, but I prefer their clothes to their minds. Their minds keep telling me, no thank you, don't touch, go away. Their clothes say, look at me, want me, I am exciting. It would be perverse not to prefer their clothes to their minds.

This male chauvinist pig, it will be evident, is not without shrewdness and wit. His sexism is, in fact, only skin deep; and through the skin, like blood or pus, painful memories of his relationships with real women force themselves in spite of all his efforts to repress them. And it is not just sexual politics, but also politics in the ordinary sense, that are explored in the course of this dark night of a Scottish soul.

> When did my job start to sour? When did my marriage start to stale? When did I start drinking too much? When did capital leave Scotland in a big way? When did the depression come to Britain? When did we start accepting a world without improvement for the unlucky?

Eventually despair and self-disgust drive Jock McLeish to a suicide attempt from which he recovers by self-induced vomiting, vividly evoked in a virtuoso display of iconic typography. After this purgative climax, the book adopts a more lucid chronological form, and the fragments of Jock's life that we have glimpsed in the gaps between his pornographic tableaux take their place in a relatively orderly account of his early life. The crux turns out to be his desertion of his first love, the naïve, uneducated but devoted Denny, for the classier but colder Helen, with whom he was unable to have sex without the assistance of bondage magazines. His addiction to pornography dates from that phase of his life, and even at the end of his long night of self-examination, as a grey dawn breaks behind the flowered curtains, his imagination is busy with a new heroine, Nina,

> who works in the jeans section of a big department EXCUSE ME PLEASE store where she one day serves an eager handsome rich young guy who is buying cowboy EXCUSE ME PLEASE pants and waistcoat for a denim-only party . . . I INSIST THAT YOU HEAR ME, DID WE RIDE THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH JUST TO LET YOU TICKLE YOURSELF INTO ANOTHER WANK? Dear God, you know I need these absurd elaborations to fool myself into believing I can once again clasp the body of a woman.

But Jock is not a hopeless case. He writes a letter resigning his job. He resolves to start a new life—what it will be, he does not know, but "I will not do nothing." He takes satisfaction in his one good memory—of standing up, as a young boy, to a lunatic schoolmaster called Hislop (a brilliant character-vignette). He takes courage from having survived the night. "Yahroohay, this has been an exhausting night, the longest of my life. . . . I must be tough to have survived a night like this."

1982 Janine was highly praised on its publication in Britain last spring, but some readers queried Gray's extensive use of the discourse of pornography. For Anthony Burgess, who greatly admired Gray's first novel, *Lanark*, the new one "raised problems because I found it pornographic . . . it does excite the glands." Another reviewer,

Work

Manual labor has barged into my life on many occasions
but seldom stayed long.
It's like an oafish cousin with thumping hands
who visits, always straining your hospitality,
his manners always cruder than you remembered,
then rumbles mercifully off toward some factory or ghetto.

When I worked for fourteen days in Gold's Delicatessen
just before my second year of college
I stole cheesecake in the cold storage room
even though Mr. Gold was an excellent man
who didn't have to give me this job but did so
as a favor to my mother who was a loyal
(but not wealthy) customer. I jammed my face
with cheesecake, nearly choked
trying to get it down before my absence could be noticed;
I strained my imagination trying to fully taste and enjoy
the cheesecake despite the speed of my chewing;
then, lips wiped on apron, back to the gray kitchen
to swab the echoing caverns of the pots
coated with corned-beef fat: swab gaily,
unbowed, because my mouth was coated
with gold, with the thrilling overtime pay of secrecy,
the taste of victory,
creamy sweetness of survival of the fittest,
Gold's expensive heavy New York Style immortality.

Otherwise, on long days when no excuse took me
into the cold storage room, it was with death
those fatty vats resounded: nothing James Deany
but slow, glutinous, suburban drab death—
and I told myself *Beat this game,*
Dodge this ditch—

and something I called "the life of the spirit"
looked worth fighting for, scheming for:

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while acknowledging that the book as a whole was a critique of sexism, observed, with a witty allusion to Robert Burns, that "a wank's a wank for 'a that."

In this respect *1982 Janine* merely exemplifies in a particularly obvious way a general trend in the contemporary novel. The increasing exploitation of pornographic images, motifs, situations, and rhetoric in "serious" literary fiction is manifest to anyone who reads it regularly (and often a shock to anyone who encounters it accidentally). The novel has always given a disproportionate amount of attention to the sexual dimension of our lives, partly because it is concerned, much more than other narrative forms, with the private, inner life of persons, which psychoanalysis has taught us is dominated by desire. In the permissive society there are no taboos on the explicit representation of sexuality in art, while commercial pornography thrusts itself upon our attention from every newsstand or video shop. It may be regrettable, but it is hardly surprising, that the imagery of pornography has impressed itself upon the literary treatment of sex. Experimental, avant-garde fiction is often more deeply implicated than mainstream work, and it has been irreverently suggested (by Susan Suleiman, for instance, an academic critic of the *nouveau roman*) that without such a lure few readers would persevere with its repetitions, permutations, and dislocations.

It would not be fair to say that of *1982 Janine*, which is thoroughly readable throughout. And although the novel, like any sexually explicit text, may be erotically stimulating or disturbing to individual readers, anyone who resorted to it for that purpose would probably be frustrated by the *coitus interruptus* of Gray's narrative technique. He is continually deconstructing the discourse of pornography, by parody, metafictional commentary ("is that anatomically possible in that position?" Jock asks himself anxiously at some crucial moment of his fantasy) and the interpellation of another, more authentic discourse—the discourse of confession—which eventually dominates the book.

If the novel is vulnerable to criticism, it is that the "real history" of Jock's relationships—with his working-class parents, his women, and his charismatic friend Alan—when unscrambled and narrated in a relatively straightforward fashion, seem a mite sentimental and/or implausible. Also, that the sociopolitical *pensées* of which Jock delivers himself in the course of his journey to the end of a long night, though shrewd and thought-provoking, seem less and less like the opinions of a Tory-voting supervisor of security systems and more and more like the views of a romantic utopian Socialist who aspires to be the modern Scottish equivalent of William Blake.

Like Blake, Alasdair Gray is a visual as well as a verbal artist. To coincide with the publication of *1982 Janine*, Penguin is issuing his *Unlikely Stories, Mostly*, a collection of Borgesian fables elaborately illustrated by the author in an exuberantly eclectic style. The contents include a story about a man who splits in half, a short revisionist history of the Industrial Revolution in which Hargreave's spinning jenny is displaced by McMenamy's knitting Granny, and several letters home by a poet at the court of China in the days of Marco Polo. It's a beautifully designed book, but I found it more fun to look at than to read. Here fantasy, unchallenged by the reality principle so tangibly evoked in *1982 Janine*, quickly degenerates into whimsy. And it isn't even very sexy.

DAVID LODGE

David Lodge's latest novel, *Small World*, was recently published in England and will be published in the United States by Macmillan.

make somebody pay me to read and write!
Mr. Gold was a good man but nothing he paid me
could have been enough, even for this
tolerable labor in a pleasant, proud deli:
if he had tripled my salary
maybe it would have been a few more weeks
before I started stealing, that's all.
. . . And eventually he'd have caught me
gorging the unearned sublime
and I'd have hated him for my shame.
And hated myself for being so clearly
an ant in an anthill and
unsatisfactory even at that.

Oh beat this game, dodge this ditch
I've coached myself year after year . . .
"The dignity of labor" is a phrase that has always
troubled me—
isn't it mostly a negative definition of dignity?
I mean, it's dignity because of what it isn't:
if you're laboring you're *not* goofing off, *not* wasting time,
not running wild with desire . . .
Then too, no doubt, something noble can be seen in
the concentration and diligence and steadiness with which
you scrub, tote, wrap, stack, count, dump, scrape.
Still such dignity doesn't clearly distinguish you
from the best of beavers or chimps, or even ants.

Leisure, now—that's a challenge.
Decadence knocks at the door and all the windows,
it softens the sofa.
Leisure says, "Are you here on earth *for* anything
except feeling swell?"
Sometimes I sit still for minutes upon minutes,
my hands doing nothing, vague noble mind seeking the cold vault
where waits the transcendental cheesecake of meaning.

MARK HALLIDAY

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A Boy And His War

Empire of the Sun
by J. G. Ballard

(Simon & Schuster, 279 pp., $16.95)

The Second World War produced a special kind of book, generally a memoir or a novel, that was unprecedented, unattempted by the writers of the Great War or any other. The theme of this book can be denominated variously as The Innocent Child in Wartime, or Innocence under Pressure in a Vile World, or Instinctive Decency Threatened by Organized Violence, or Naïveté Assaulted by Mechanized Cynicism. Doubtless the reason is the Holocaust, that all-too-actual massacre of innocents. One book in this tradition is Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird*. Another is the best-seller of spring 1941, the pseudonymous Dirk van der Heide's *My Sister and I: The Diary of a Dutch Boy Refugee*. The best is probably Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*. One curious by-blow of the tradition is Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*, much more of a "wartime" book than we normally remember, even if the integrity of the boy hero is threatened not by the Gestapo or the Japanese but by the numerous "phonies" emplaced all over the East Coast of the United States. For whatever reason, the Second World War offers itself as especially apprehensible through the imagery of child abuse.

J. G. Ballard's new novel is a book comparable to these in every respect, except literary merit. His child hero is Jim, 11 years old in December 1941. He lives a comfortable, upper-middle-class existence with his British mother and businessman father in the International Settlement of Shanghai. Their setup is, to say the least, anomalous. Outside their compound coolies starve, child prostitutes ply their trade, and each morning several corpses are visible on the sidewalk Jim takes to school; inside the wall all is cricket flannels, private schools, golf, cocktails, Anglicanism, lawn fêtes and self-satisfaction.

Although we are not vouchsafed Jim's surname, we know it is Ballard, for a foreword indicates that the boy's experiences as a wartime internee of the Japanese are Ballard's own. Indeed, he writes: "For the most part this novel is an eyewitness account of events I observed during the Japanese occupation of Shanghai." (The question instantly arises: why not, then, write an eyewitness account, unfogged by gestures and maneuvers thought appropriate to "the novel"?) The main settings are the beat-up roads around Shanghai, where for many days Jim and his fellow aliens are trucked without food, or water, or toilets, or anything else; and the internment camp they finally reach, near Lunghua. There almost two thousand British, Dutch, and American nationals, unfortunate enough to be around on December 8, 1941, were imprisoned for four years of hunger and humiliation.

Jim has been an excellent student at the British Cathedral School and a member of the choir. He is as British as possible—pluck, decency, that sort of thing—although he's never been to England, being in all respects a colonial boy. But a very bright one. As the war in the East begins he's in the midst of "writing a book" titled *How to Play Contract Bridge*. He likes chess. He knows a great deal about military aircraft of all nations. He is also "keen on Scripture, especially now that he was an atheist."

In the early stages of his adventure, he tries to get captured like the rest of the foreign colony, including his mother and father, but the Japanese troops don't seem to notice or care about this odd European boy cycling endlessly about the city, sleeping in the grand houses vacated by the commercial and diplomatic community and subsisting on the nourishment left behind there—largely cocktail biscuits, liqueur chocolates, and club soda, leftovers from "the fifty-year-long party that had been Shanghai." Wandering the city, he notes ideological oddities, the surprising pleasure of the locals, for example, at seeing the foreign concession seized and looted, even if by Japanese hands. The public beatings, stranglings, and beheadings of riff-raff which used to be conducted by the Chinese are now managed by the Japanese, and no one seems to mind except the few arrested Europeans who occasionally look on, and their views have stopped mattering. Seen from Shanghai, the Second World War looks remarkably like a fight between Asians (of all types) and Westerners.

The innocent Jim encounters copious cruelty and neglect, contempt, brutality, and violence. The friendship of those who do take him up proves doubtful, especially that of Basie, an effeminate, cynical former cabin steward on an American vessel, skilled in theft and fraud. "Jim's entire upbringing," we are reminded, "could have been designed to prevent him from meeting people like Basie, but the war changed everything." Basie's hope, it turns out, is to sell Jim to some Chinese traders, but they're not interested.

THE second half of the novel takes place at the prison camp. It is now 1944, and Jim is so thin he's learned to avoid looking at his reflection. He's become adept at scrounging his share—sometimes more than his share—of water and hot yams, and he's learned to keep a close watch on who's dying in order to get the cadaver's rations before anyone catches on. He learns to bow low to the Japanese privates as if he means it, and to get his protein by devouring the weevils in the wheat. He slakes his curiosity by attending the nightly "lectures" in the camp—on the Pyramids, "the history of the land-speed record, the life of a district commissioner in Uganda, the infantry weapons of the Great War," and anything else anyone knows enough to discourse about. At first Jim looks for his parents around every corner, but gradually their images fade until finally he can't recall what they look like. He spends his time watching the kamikaze pilots, teenagers, most of them, suiting up and taking off from the nearby airfield. And he gauges the progress of the war by the quantity and impudence of the Mustangs and B-29s, which gradually come to fill the sky. With interests like these, Jim finally comes close to enjoying the war, for he and the camp adapt to each other, and helping it run itself—he helps distribute the daily rations—becomes the meaning of his life. Adult onlookers who have known the pre-war world are shocked by Jim's acceptance of this one. One of them asks: "*Do* you want the war to end, Jim?" And when the war does end, Jim's props are quite pulled from under him.

Along the way there are some acute

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insights into prison-camp life. Once the cigarettes have all been smoked, one of the main units of barter or currency is the G.I. issue condom, stacks of which serve as chips at poker games and "coins" in petty commerce. "These grubby rubbers," Ballard reports, "formed Lunghua Camp's main unit of currency. The number in circulation had barely fallen in three years, not because there was little sexual intercourse . . . but for the reason that the contraceptives were too valuable as units of exchange to be used for idle purposes."

The end of the war triggers a succession of nightmare events. European civilians, kicked out of their camps, starve and die on the roads. The Japanese beat the Chinese to death with staves, and sometimes vice versa. The Kuomintang and the Communists continue killing each other, when both are not busied with deals involving the black market and "surplus" merchandise. American planes strafe friend and foe alike—for the exercise, or out of sheer joy at the end of the war. Occasionally they parachute down great metal canisters filled with Spam, coffee, cigarettes, and fresh copies of the *Readers Digest*. There are terrible rumors, mad marches and countermarches, and a sudden bright white flash visible all the way across the China Sea—the Nagasaki bomb.

IN SHANGHAI the peace is fully as messy as the war. It's not really peace at all, rather "a vacuum that would soon be filled by every warlord and disaffected general in China." At the end,

> At least three Nationalist armies were closing around Shanghai, jockeying among themselves for control of the airfields, dockyards, and railway lines, and above all for the stocks of weapons and munitions left behind by the Japanese. Collaborating with the Nationalists, though sometimes fighting against them, were the remnants of the puppet armies, groups of renegade Kuomintang driven back to the coast, and various militia forces recruited by the local warlords who had returned to Shanghai.

Observing all this, Jim realizes that being inside the camp, even considering the weevils, was better than being outside it; and he arrives at an understanding that he is watching World War III (that is, the anti-colonialist war) being born out of its predecessor. For now he

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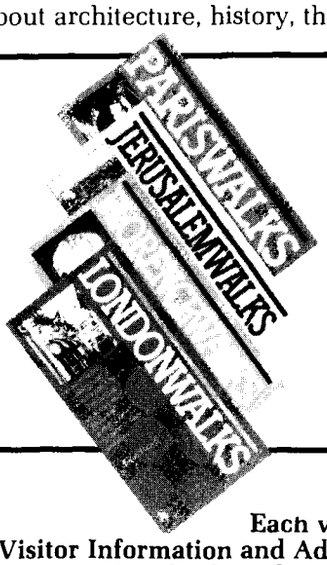

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notices that, regardless of their class or party, Chinese of all sorts "looked at Europeans in a way Jim had never seen before the war, as if they no longer existed . . . ." Jim finally rejoins his parents, who seem quite unreal, and at the end ships off to school in an equally unreal England. The place that is, alas, his own, is wartime Shanghai, "this terrible city."

Compelling narrative material, obviously. Thus it is a pity Mr. Ballard hasn't written it well enough to give his version of battered innocence much chance to outlast its publishing season. He has been praised so highly by Susan Sontag ("one of the most important, intelligent voices in contemporary fiction") and by Martin Amis (Ballard's fiction is "brilliantly imagined and executed") that one feels an absolute rotter pointing out that he doesn't write very well. He's known as a writer of science fiction; perhaps in that milieu narrative is not impeded by imprecise language, strained and obscure metaphors, implausible motivations, and unbelievable characters. Here they do no end of damage, constantly distracting the reader's attention. Ballard has been celebrated for "surrealistic" effects like this description: "Fifty yards away the corpse of a young Chinese woman floated among the sampans, heels rotating around her head. . . ." What? Or consider this: "The terrain of trenches and blockhouses seemed to have sprung fully armed from Jim's head," leaving the reader to wonder in precisely what way that battered landscape resembles the goddess Athena. The first time Ballard wrote that "flies festered" on someone's face, I assumed a misprint for "clustered" or something like that. The second time (flies "festered on his lips") I didn't know what to think. The third time ("the flies festered over the bodies") I leapt out of my chair and looked up "fester," to discover that it never means or has meant anything but "ulcerate" or "putrefy." No one will ever know what Ballard's flies are doing. Nor what the word "stressed" is supposed to convey in "Jim listened to the low but stressed sound of the truck's engine." Sometimes the temptation is toward Fine Writing (Bold Metaphor Department), and we get this: "The circling steel [tram-]rails rang beneath [the marching Japanese marines'] boots, the *diagram* of their victory over the British and American gunboats." The *Times Literary Supplement* once called Ballard "one of the most sensitive and enigmatic novelists of the present day." Enigmatic I'm willing to endorse. Sensitive, no.

PAUL FUSSELL

THE MEMORY OF A MAN

Home Before Dark
by Susan Cheever

(Houghton Mifflin, 243 pp., $15.95)

Three simple facts I learned from Susan Cheever's calm, small memoir of her father surprised me more than the revelation of two tangled secrets, his alcoholism and his homosexuality. First, John Cheever was short. I'd assumed that the long head and the large hunger for redemption in the physical world belonged to a long, large body. Second, he spoke in what his daughter describes as "a clipped mumble, a combination of swallowed words and low laughter, short a's and broad Yankeeisms." That's about as far from the outstanding balance and clarity of his prose as one might imagine—prose in which his daughter acutely hears the dignified, resonant cadences of Bishop Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer. And most unsettling of all to my sense of the writer, whose narratives about his disquieted characters were marked by a lyric tone of nostalgia, "he never saved anything," Susan Cheever tells us—not letters, not books, not even drafts of manuscripts.

Actually John Cheever did save at least one thing—his journals, thirty volumes' worth, luminous quotations from which are scattered through Susan Cheever's book. Those, along with letters, papers, memories, and other evidence assembled in what she rightly calls "rough narrative shape," tend to undermine her too sweeping claim that "He scorned all conservative instincts." In fact, if a central theme emerges from her loving account of her father, it is his ambivalent view of the past. The title itself—her father's invention, she tells us in her opening chapter—points to the clear-eyed but complicated nostalgia that seems to haunt his life and his art.

Moved to keep a journal in 1981 when she learned of her father's impending death, Susan Cheever found herself venturing beyond the "slim volume of anecdote and remembrance" she at first planned, looking further into the uneasy soul beneath the trim Shetland sweaters. It's a risky step to have taken, not just because she's writing about her famous father, but because she's writing about a man who took pains to express his distrust of psychological probing in both life and art. In an interview in the 1970s he lamented

> the prolonged psychoanalytic conversations many of my generation experienced, where too great an emphasis was put on our motives and too little on the thrust of life. To "mine" was the term the doctor's used. . . . We became accustomed to seeking motives for our present acts and then coming up triumphantly with something sordid from the past. As I see it, the continents of motive are far away and unknown, and their coastlines are out of sight.

His scorn for the psychiatrists his family urged him to visit in his dark times was, Susan Cheever reports, boundless. And as she aptly notes, the same aversion to psychic excavation characterized his writing:

> he did not like to talk about human emotions. He did talk, often eloquently, about human behavior. Are they really the same? I don't think so. My father's intense concentration on what you can see and hear and smell and touch was at the core of his gift as a writer. He focused on the surface and texture of life, not on the emotions and motives underneath.

Her father's daughter, Susan Cheever pays careful attention to the demonstrable details of life among the Cheevers (sometimes a little too careful: after guiding us through the family tree, she might have skipped the canine geneology). Tracing several generations of the old Boston Cheever clan, she sets the scene for her grandfather Cheever's traumatic downfall during the Depres-

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sion. From there her account follows John Cheever's journey to ever more spacious surroundings and more renown: first from a New York City apartment where he began his literary career in the 1930s (the stark dinginess of it is immortalized in a Walker Evans photograph) to Yaddo, the writers' colony that became a regular retreat for him. She then sketches her family's migration from an apartment within earshot of the rumbling Queensborough Bridge, to a rented house on a plush Westchester estate in the 1950s, to a huge apartment in Italy for a year after the publication of his first novel, and finally in 1960 to their own house in Ossining, New York. In her later chapters there are harrowing accounts of the alcoholism that almost brought her father under in the 1970s, and an unexpectedly tender portrait of the homosexuality that disturbed him but was also "as sweet and satisfying a source of love as love could be for him."

AS IMPORTANT as tending to the actual facts, Susan Cheever emphasizes her father's zeal for imaginatively building upon past events—far more fruitful, he was convinced, than mining them for sordid psychological clues. "I have been a storyteller since the beginning of my life, rearranging facts in order to make them more interesting and sometimes more significant," he wrote in his journal. "I have improvised a background for myself—genteel, traditional—and it is generally accepted." She describes Cheever's alternate myths about himself and his past: his sometimes exhilarating sense of exile from a brittle Boston Brahmin clan on the one hand, and his longing for, as his daughter puts it, a "kind of eccentric class, old-fashioned servants, and grassy elegance" on the other. (The creative embroidery of the facts was contagious; journalists, Susan Cheever writes, were eager to report on "his hunting dogs, his elegant country estate, his staff, his saddle horses," none of which really existed.)

But among the daily details and the family legends, Susan Cheever also weaves in the more probing sort of psychological speculations her father liked to dismiss. Her allusions to underlying themes in his life sometimes muddle the narrative line. But hers are hardly rigid, reductive formulations—and, unexpectedly, some of them seem to be ones her father himself tried out. Here, prefaced with the generous sympathy that characterizes Susan Cheever's tone throughout, is the heart of her analysis:

> How can I describe the richness and confusion my father brought to all his experience whether he wrote about it or not? He was in flight from a cruel and humiliated father, but the image of the old gent with his simple Yankee ways and his masculine, physical view of the world was in another way everything my father wanted to be.

John Cheever captured his predicament more graphically and urgently, as his daughter gives us a chance to see in one of the quotations from his letters that she includes. "Dear Rip," he wrote the young man who was his close friend and lover for the last half decade or so of his life,

> I am truly concerned with your response to what your father said because the greatest and the most bitter mystery in my life was my father. It seemed, from adolescence, that we must learn to love one another. Anything less, it seemed, would wreak some basic damage to my spiritual balance. This problem appears in all the books and the stories. It was he who invited an abortionist to dinner. It was he who was discovered drunken, debauched and naked but for a string of champagne corks. . . . I have finessed these scenes but when he failed me as he did a thousand times, I found my cock and balls in a wringer. I was determined not to lose that sense of locus I would have lost if I dismissed him as a tragic clown. I persevered, I may have done no more, but it is all part of a chain of being and when you have sons, as you will, it will be easier to comprehend.

John Cheever's daughter has persevered in trying to comprehend this man who set great store by an often dark "determination to trace some moral chain of being," as he put it. But she also conveys the "love of light" that he said was the other "constant that I look for." The man she introduces to us swam vigorously in cold swimming pools and also sank into drunken stupors, made her bemoan her ungainliness and also feel, and have faith in, the grace of language. She grew up in the houses where he never quite felt at home. Her book makes us hope for a longer look at his journals, which seem likely to open windows onto the woods where his soul wandered, ebullient, bitter, and eloquent.

ANN HULBERT

TRB, *from page 6*

"My Grandfather Truman," he said, "ran off with Mary Jane Holmes and was married here in Shelbyville and lived on an adjoining farm out here west of the town. Then he went to Missouri—was afraid to go back home."

As the train pulled out reporters could hear Mr. Truman over the loudspeaker good-naturedly assuring his daughter of the validity of his runaway grandparents' marriage lines. Later on Charles G. Ross, White House press secretary, hurried back to the press car to make sure that reporters understood the President had been facetious in his remark about the marriage.

That was thirty-six years ago. How the press smiled as the roaming Presidential Special returned to Washington at the amusingly appalling thought of a Truman victory! Preposterous. Of course the Truman crowds *had* been getting bigger. The gap had narrowed. But we couldn't *all* be wrong. There was the reassuring unanimity of the press. Today, with another "sure" election only a few weeks off, I read my comment of October 14, 1948, with a shudder: "It is now as certain as anything can be in the course of American politics that Gov. Dewey is elected, and the nation knows it and yawns over the final chapter of a campaign whose outcome was certain before it began." I am not half as sure of anything political now as I was then.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

The End Is Nigh

THE MORNING AFTER Reagan-Mondale II, *The Washington Post* carries the full text of the debate, broken up section by section with subheads indicating the various topics covered: "Lebanon," "Immigration," "Arms Negotiations," "Armageddon," "Central America," and so on. The usual foreign policy stuff. As for the debate itself, it was *whoa*, there. *Armageddon?* What's going on here? How did *that* get in?

IT'S INTERESTING how issues get legitimated. This Armageddon thing had been bubbling under the surface for about a year. I first became aware of it last winter, when a reader sent me a Xerox of a sort of open letter written by a citizen of Ashville, North Carolina, named Madison Polk. Mr. Polk's letter began, "Dear Fellow American: I am a conservative Republican who is terrified by Ronald Reagan," and it went on to cite scraps of evidence suggesting that the President might possibly believe that the battle of Armageddon will take place some time soon. I put the letter into the folder where I keep bizarre clippings and similar ephemera, meaning to do something with it eventually. Last April, Ronnie Dugger, the founder of the *Texas Observer*, wrote about Reagan's alarming views on Armageddon in the "Outlook" section of the Sunday *Washington Post*. That caused a bit of talk, but Mr. Dugger is a known anti-Reagan agitator, and an "Outlook" piece is not quite enough to turn a notion into an issue. The only American institution with that kind of ontological clout is, of course, *The New York Times*, and on the very day of the second Reagan-Mondale debate the *Times* conferred existence on the Armageddon issue. It did so with a story on page 32 of the main news section of the Sunday paper, written by John Herbers, one of the soberest members of the *Times*' Washington bureau, and headlined RELIGIOUS LEADERS TELL OF WORRY ON ARMAGEDDON VIEW ASCRIBED TO REAGAN. The story pulled together a number of accounts of the President's views on the end of the world. It made interesting reading.

APPARENTLY THE APOCALYPSE is one of the old boy's favorite subjects. "Never, in the time between the prophecies up until now, has there been a time in which so many of the prophecies are coming together," the leader of the free world told *People* magazine last December, adding: "There have been times in the past when people thought the end of the world was coming, and so forth, but never anything like this." A couple of months before that, according to the *Jerusalem Post*, the custodian of the nuclear button made the following comment to Thomas Dine of the American Israel Public Affairs Commission: "I turn back to your ancient prophets in the Old Testament and the signs foretelling Armageddon, and I find myself wondering if we're the generation that's going to see that come about." And two years before that, in the course of a chat about Armageddon with Senator Howell Heflin of Alabama, the C.-in-C. confided, "Russia is going to get involved in it." Again, these Reaganisms were not a secret. But until the *Times* collated them, they might as well have been. As my friend and colleague Mort Kondracke reports elsewhere in this issue, I urged him to try to get the matter discussed in the debate. But I'd never have dreamed of making such a suggestion if the *Times* had not spoken. It was the *Times* that freed Marvin Kalb to pop the question.

THE PRESIDENT'S answer merits careful study. "Mr. Kalb," he said, "I think what has been hailed as something I'm supposedly, as President, discussing as principle is the result of just some philosophical discussions with people who are interested in the same things. And that is the prophecies down through the years, the Biblical prophecies of what would portend the coming of Armageddon and so forth, and the fact that a number of theologians for the last decade or more have believed that this was true, that the prophecies are coming together that portend that. But no one knows whether Armageddon is a thousand years away or the day after tomorrow. So I have never seriously warned and said we must plan according to Armageddon." Obviously this was meant to be reassuring, but the more one contemplates it the less reassured one feels. All kidding aside, this whole "prophecies are coming together" line of thought is quite mad. It's flat-out, lunatic-fringe, nut-case crazy. To make matters infinitely worse, the event being "prophesied" is not some Jeane Dixon triviality about Ryan and Farrah but rather the destruction of civilization—an event it is within Reagan's power to cause. We should all be deeply alarmed when the President of the United States solemnly tells us that he regards this kind of rattle-brained tripe as a serious subject for "philosophical discussions." The President's remarks at the debate establish beyond doubt that he believes that Armageddon is inevitable. The only question is whether the end will come before or after the election. It would be nice to pin him down on the time frame a bit more precisely. Unfortunately, that will not be possible. The debate was the last unscripted event of the Reagan campaign.

AM I BEING too harsh in using words like "crazy"? Judge for yourself. When he spoke of "theologians," Mr. Reagan was almost certainly referring to television evangelists such as Jerry Falwell. These individuals, writes Mr. Herbers in the *Times*, believe that "the present age is under the control of Satan and is rapidly approaching the time when Soviet, European, Iranian, Arab, African, and Chinese armies will invade Israel; that their armies will be destroyed by a limited nuclear war, and millions of Israelis will die, but a remnant will be saved to accept Jesus as Christ." At this point, "Christians" all over the world will physically lift off, rising bodily out of their homes, cars, offices, and TV studios into the sky like missiles clearing their silos. What these good people will do with their bodies up in the sky is a nice question. The idea of having to lug one's body around with one in the celestial realm sounds about as convenient as a lead suitcase. This stuff is bonkers any way you look at it. Reagan views it as "philosophy." We can only hope that the President regards "philosophy" as something wholly unconnected with any other area of life. At the very least, we Americans are no longer entitled to make fun of India for having a Prime Minister who consults astrologers.

H.H.

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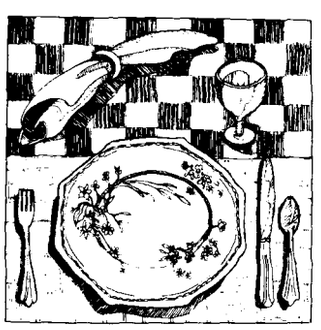

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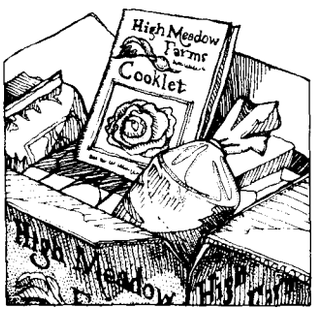

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